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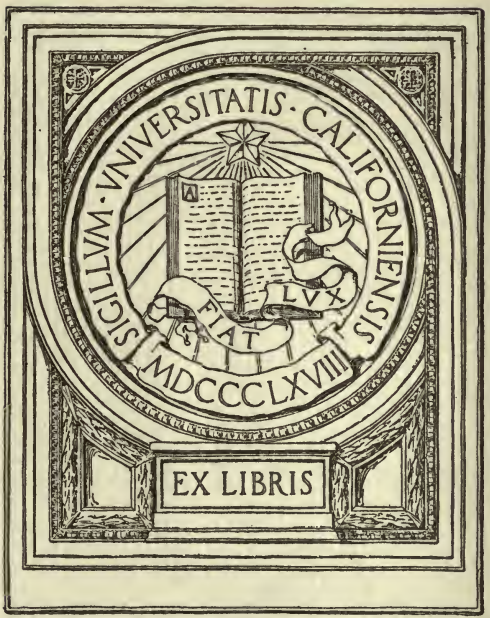

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# THE METHOD OF JESUS

*AN INTERPRETATION OF PERSONAL RELIGION*

BY

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To Her
Whose Culture of Mind and Heart,
Sweetness of Disposition,
High Ideals,
Patience and Charity,
Have Enriched My Life,
And Left a Precious Heritage,
My Wife.

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# PREFACE.

In recent theological thinking a wide gap exists between two schools. Conservatives reiterate time-worn conceptions. Progressives proclaim views so far in advance that only specialists can keep pace with their rate of speed. Between the two the great mass of Christians, dissatisfied with the old theology because of its obvious inadequacy, yet not understanding the new, stand in perplexity, uncertain what to believe. All such need to know that the new theology, wherein true, is really involved in, and as yet but partially evolved from, the old.

Theology is but man's attempt to state his conception of the divine nature and the divine laws. As man develops in capacity to appreciate the Infinite, and perceives ever a little more clearly the operations of divine energy and the expression of divine thought, his theology must change; it cannot remain at a standstill. But he will need no new Bible;

he simply needs to understand the old Bible better.

The following attempt to interpret the method of Jesus is Biblical. In its advance it seeks to proceed only a step at a time. If offers a helping hand to those who move cautiously and slowly. For others who have thought long and far upon the topics here treated, these pages will have a small, if any message; but the earnest hope is entertained that they may be a real help in stimulating some to study, and to understand, both the mind and the method of the Master.

A. W. A.

COBB DIVINITY SCHOOL, LEWISTON, ME.

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# THE METHOD OF JESUS.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE ULTIMATE PRINCIPLE.

JESUS CHRIST professed to present to men, in substance, the final form of religion. When given, it was not elaborated in detail, but lay infolded in the germ, ready to develop under favorable conditions and in due process of time. Jesus gave, however, the ultimate principle. What is that ultimate principle? What is the essential feature of the teaching of Jesus? The creeds and sects and controversies of nineteen centuries show how variously these questions have been answered.

"God's love," cry some, "is the chief fact proclaimed by Jesus;" and they set forth upon a new crusade, as if under a new standard. A prominent utterance it surely was on the lips, and in the still plainer language of the life, of Jesus, — a marvelous truth for the world to know and the church to con, a truth too little

understood even now amongst men; and yet this was scarcely the chief proclamation of Jesus, and cannot be made the center of faith. Are we to rely upon the love of God and nothing more? Is his love the way, the truth, and the life? While the very essence of the divine nature, yet divine love cannot be the cardinal feature of religion. The love of God is not the object of worship, cannot be regarded as the expression of man's relation to God, is not regulative of human destiny, save as modified by divine wisdom and justice, and cannot be alone the principle of man's faith. Divine love underlies, surrounds, permeates, and determines the characteristics of the religion which Jesus revealed, but yet is not the chief fact for man to consider.

Did Christ come, then, to establish primarily an ecclesiastical system? Can it be said that the church is the way, the truth, and the life? Is she the pivot on which religion revolves? Does she possess exclusive control of divine favors and blessings here on earth? In substance these claims have been made for her. Men have deemed attachment to the church, compliance with her requirements, and confidence in her acts, of paramount importance. Her absolution they have deemed perfect, her blessings divine, her explanations inspired, her

decrees infallible. Tendencies in this direction exist in more than one communion. But is this the true core of what Christ brought the world? Does the kingdom of God, which he proclaimed and established, mean an organization circumscribed by human suffrage, with membership therein determined by the decree of man, one or many?

Perhaps the Apostle Paul magnified faith more than did Jesus, and thereby turned the thought of Christian disciples too much to the systematic statement of the substance of that faith. Certainly the Nicene creed gives a hundred-fold greater prominence to abstract theological conceptions than does the Sermon on the Mount; and much of the experience of the church to-day is determined by the inherited influences of that creed, rather than by the teachings of Jesus. It was not faith of an abstract character that Jesus emphasized, certainly not a faith that embodied a definition of sin, and an explanation of salvation, and convictions concerning God's sovereignty and man's free agency. When Jesus speaks of faith, it is invariably of a faith in himself. He is supreme; faith is but a channel leading to him. The faith which means merely an intellectual apprehension and syllogistic statement of Biblical history, chronology, and doctrine,

while perhaps representing orthodoxy, cannot represent Christianity. Jesus Christ has left no evidence that he was a great theologian in the modern sense. He set forth no statement so completely as did Paul. Works upon systematic theology, which appear in his name to-day, would seem out of place in his hands. Theology is important, but it must find its center in him.

Are we to discover, then, the emphasis of Jesus upon works? Surely he declared that not they who simply cried "Lord, Lord," should enter into the kingdom of God; he gave instructions about doing good in daily life; he promised rewards for merely distributing cold water; he depicted the final judgment as phrased in recognition of various charitable and philanthropic deeds, such as become the most practical system of Christian ethics; yet Jesus did not proclaim as ultimate and final the virtue of good deeds and the necessity of noble living. If that were all, Aristotle and Socrates and Plato might have sufficed as saviors of the world.

Morality has been decried and abused in time past by a considerable part of the preaching that meant to be Christian. Now it is in danger of being too highly exalted by another part of the preaching that means to be Christian. But

it must not assume more than its right. A Christian is not a Christian in spite of what he does, as was once thought; because of faith he cannot presumptuously commit sin. Antinomianism is dead; let it be dead; but the reaction must not follow. Works alone do not suffice. The center of religion is far beyond them. Christ affirmed that the virtue of a deed lay not in the deed itself, but in the spirit with which the deed was performed. Motive sanctifies movement; intention gives character to action; devotion ennobles all endeavor; love hallows labor. Jesus asked for works done in his name. The true value of the works lay in their relation to him.

The fact is, with whatever truth he proclaimed, Jesus laid stress upon himself. He employed habitually the emphatic "I." "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father except by Me." It is the supremest egotism the world has ever known or dreamed of, an egotism steeped in humility, an egotism transformed by self-sacrifice, an egotism actuated by love; it is a self-consciousness, never forgetting itself, yet never seeking its own; it is self-justification — "which one of you convinceth Me of sin?" — yet never boastful; it recognizes the possession of infinite power, yet never employs

that power for personal comfort or personal safety. It is the unparalleled paradox of all history.

Jesus Christ is the central fact; he is the ultimate principle. He stands in the forefront throughout the New Testament, both in the Gospels and in the Epistles, in the preaching of the apostles as well as in his own declarations. John came preaching him: "Behold the Lamb of God." Jesus proclaimed himself without stint: "I am the door," "I am the good shepherd," "I am the bread that came down out of heaven," "Moses wrote of Me," "and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me," "I and my Father are one," "All men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." While he proclaimed the kingdom of heaven, the love of God, and the redemption of man from sin, yet he preached himself most. He inaugurated, as never before nor since, a religion of personality.

The apostles preached not faith, not works, not conversion, nor baptism, nor sanctification; not the church, not theology, not creeds, nor theories of God's purposes, plans, government or attributes; but they preached Christ, — Christ crucified, Christ risen, Christ living as savior, sanctifier, strength-giver, and life: Christ the Son of God, the atonement for sin, the great

example, the present and loving friend. In all their preaching they lifted him up. The substance of Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost lies in the conclusion, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ." It was of the same subject that Peter again discoursed unto the people on the day when the lame beggar was healed "at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful:" "Unto you first, God, having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you from his iniquities." On the next day thereafter, before the rulers, Peter and John bore testimony that "neither is there any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." It was the Christ foretold in prophecy of whom Stephen preached. Unto the eunuch "Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at the same scripture preached unto him Jesus." Of Paul the simple record is, that after his conversion, "straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God."

This, then, is Christianity's own central fact, not an abstraction, an axiom, an obligation; not a posture, a form, a genuflexion; not a rite, nor a ceremony; not an offering, a gift, nor a sacri-

fice demanded; not a place, a feeling, a memory; nothing, indeed, but a personality, a living being, the Christ.

Suppose one expounds to a child the depths of tenderness and the patient endurance of a mother's love; or lets the child nestle in its mother's arms, weep out its woes, and tell its joys in the sympathizing ear: which method will reveal to the child the real maternal affection? Can another's eloquence take the place of personal experience? Was ever a boy asked to subscribe to the statement that his mother weighed one hundred and forty-six pounds, stood five feet and three inches tall, was composed of so many parts of hydrogen and oxygen, so many parts of nitrogen, so many parts of phosphates, and so many parts of other chemical substances? Do we in this way ascertain whether a lad loves, honors, and obeys his mother, and tries to imitate her? Is it thus we relate ourselves to persons? The dialectics of affection, of friendship, of maternity, can never disclose to the hungry human heart what love is, and what friendship contains of sympathy and helpfulness and joy, and what "mother" means in all the long years of life from the cradle to the grave.

Alas! it has been only in religion that men have thought it needful to inquire into devotion by means of the catechism, to ascertain the

heartbeats by investigating what the head contains, to test the depth of love by the strength and lucidity of opinion, and to estimate the value of discipleship by the correctness of theological views. The invitation of Jesus to the labor-weary and the heavy-burdened is like that of a mother: "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest;" his call to men of sorrow and suffering and weakness was the assurance of a friend to render them help, to share their griefs, to relieve their perplexities, and to enlighten their ignorance.

The personality of the Christ is far above all mere formulæ of religion and creed-statements. It is to a person that Christianity has ever invited its followers, and yet the very disciples who associated with him three years in his Palestinian ministry did not comprehend his person and his mission, — "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" And many another disciple, even after decades of discipleship, fails to realize his discipleship to a real person, a living spirit. Christianity in its essence is simpler than many a Christian thinks. We struggle with great volumes, we are catechised upon profound mysteries, we do not hesitate to formulate opinions concerning eternal truths of which the beginning lies in the counsels of God, and the end

terminates with eternity; we profess allegiance to this or that doctrine, when all the time the simple question should be, What is Christ to us? What is our relation to our Friend, Brother, Saviour?

There is nothing mystical about belief in the personality of Jesus. If one believes in any kind of immortality; if one has place for a belief in the existence of spiritual beings of any nature, if one but clearly recognizes the psychic phenomena, so much discussed to-day, of the continuity of a personal mind, for example, from youth to old age, while the physical tenement-house undergoes renovation and complete replacement a score of times, or of the telepathic influences which overleap space and seem independent of mere body, or of the mental contents which as hopes, aspirations, and convictions transcend all experience, and point to a life now lived that is more than purely material; if indeed one has place for these conceptions in his thinking, then has one a natural and inevitable place for the recognition of the present personal existence of Jesus Christ.

With most of mankind the friends who died yesterday are not dead; having laid aside their material forms, they are living still. Only the body died. The tenement-house crumbled, but the tenant has moved forth into larger quar-

ters, into greater freedom. Jesus lives, as they, yet far more truly ; for he lives without limitation. After his death he proved his life; and no fact of Christianity is more completely demonstrated, and in no other religion is there one fact so clearly proved as the resurrection. Before the crucifixion he manifested the scope of his possibilities by showing his nature as far above that of man, while yet living as man. To believe in the spiritual existence of Jesus, in his attributes which overtop space and time, is but the legitimate transcendentalism that notes whither history, science, religion, and human need point. The religion of personality employs present tenses. We are invited not merely to an historic Christ, but also to a living Christ.

Of himself Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Paraphrased, this might read, "I am the means, the end, and the power; the final goal am I, the avenue leading thereto, and the very power by which one passes over the road; in me alone are destination, route, and power of locomotion; I am the way, the truth and the life."

Truth surely is the goal. This age seeks truth. What are the facts? That is the inquiry of science. What do the facts portend? What lies back of appearance? These are the

lines of investigation pursued by scientists and philosophers. Mere opinion, mere conjecture, phenomena alone, are worth less to-day than ever before, because to-day more than ever before, men are seeking for truth. Even some of the commotions taking place in many of our longest settled, most conservative convictions show that we are not content to receive inheritances from the past unquestioned, but are bound to ask, "Are they true?" and probe them to the core.

So Jesus proclaimed himself as the end. He is the solution that men seek, if they did but know it. While working on a problem, men do not know the answer that they seek, but Jesus has the answer all worked out. He is the religous finality, when he is fully understood. He does not profess to state which is the true system of therapeutics, allopathy, or homœopathy, nor to declare whether each and every one of Darwin's conclusions concerning the evolution of species are correct; nor does he give the least suggestion that he purposes to solve all difficulties in geology, biology, astronomy, or chemistry; nor that he will explain the composition of the Pentateuch, or any problem pertaining to the physical, material, mental, or even moral universe. He plainly indicates in which domain he answers inquiries, and pro-

fesses to be the end, truth. It is the spiritual, the religious domain alone: "No man cometh to the Father except by Me;" "he that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father also." In man's search for God, Christ will answer questions. He is truth; here he follows every interrogation point with an explanation, but not with a period; for there may be more to learn, — more questions, more answers, more growth, more truth.

The goal is ultimate. He who comes thereto need seek no further, though at the goal he needs still to understand the true significance of his attainment. He who comes to the ultimate principle obtains a complete revelation, though not yet completed within himself, for his soul must assimilate what he has found, and can assimilate but slowly. Nevertheless he has attained the vantage ground where he can learn the proper relation of his own soul to the divine; can experience the appropriate peace and contentment that the human heart, with sin oppressed, craves before its sovereign, and can receive the stimulus and strength that weak humanity requires in order to render it adequate for divine obligations: "The truth shall make you free."

"I am the way," said Jesus. One city lies forty miles distant from another; can it be said that the way to the latter lies through the lat-

ter? that the destination and the route are one? Yet this is what Jesus says of himself: "The way to Me lies through Me." Christ is the means as well as the end; to find him one must make use of him. At first this may seem absurd, but only at first. Christ's seeking man precedes man's seeking him; his overtures antedate any of man's desires. He is at the door before man opens the door; to find him is really to find oneself in relation to him. To know him a little is to learn of him more; to see him dimly is to bring him nearer; to hear of him from others is to become acquainted with him for oneself. It is the fulfillment of the saying of old, "To him that hath shall be given." A little of Christ reveals more of Christ, and it requires a little to find the more.

Employing Christ to find Christ is as diversified a process as are the experiences of the human heart and the possibilities of human life. No two start from the same point. In different directions, at different angles, they approach one common center. If each employs what each already knows of Christ, the issue will be for each the same. To put in practice truth already discerned leads to more truth; to meditate upon mystery is but to prepare the soul for entrance into the mystery, and, indeed, to pick

away little by little upon the substance of the mystery itself; even telling to others half-realized hopes and indistinct impressions is to limn upon the soul in clearer outlines every aspect of these hopes and impressions. It is by taking the truth and pondering upon it that the truth becomes vital.

Every little truth is the germ of a great truth. Involution has preceded evolution by the infinite distance of infinite thought. All was implicit; very little as yet has been rendered explicit. When the mind steadily contemplates one serious truth, confirmation comes from every side, even from the most unexpected and unlikely sources. So any fact in Christ's life and utterances and influence may be the starting point for a fuller revelation and a completer understanding of him. It is but necessary to begin.

Jesus is also the life. Life means vitality, activity, strength; it may be called power, although it is not mere abstract force; it is vastly more, for in man life involves spiritual, as well as physical, functions. But Christ is power unto his disciples, he is the support and strength of his followers. "Without Me ye can do nothing," he said to them. "My grace is sufficient for thee," was his message to the Apostle Paul, and that apostle straight-

way replied, "In weakness am I then strong." Jesus restores flagging zeal, he imparts new courage, he quickens drooping energies, he gives large outlooks and high resolves to his disciples.

But we have no warrant to claim that he will always bend to our wishes and answer our weak prayers just as we make them, foolishly oftentimes, though uttered in his name and, as we may think, according to his will. Were he so to yield to us his power, he would but repudiate his own wisdom, and accept our scant supply instead. The attempt to dictate to the Almighty in regard to health either of ourselves or of our friends belongs to no kind of science, "Christian" or "natural." That the Almighty has power is not in question; his wisdom alone is at stake, — a wisdom which has ordained the laws of the universe, physical as well as spiritual.

In the sphere of spiritual search and heart-inquiry that power, however, is unreservedly available for man. He is the life for those who seek God: "No man cometh unto the Father except by Me." For entrance to God Christ's help is needful; to find Christ is to be borne on unto God; to enter into Christ is to enter into God; "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father also."

But a transformation takes place in this fellowship. Two friends in proportion to their intimacy grow alike. Husband and wife in the union of close accord tend to conform each to the other even in physical appearance. In fact all sympathy tends to assimilation, and love causes coalescence. So in the fellowship and friendship of Jesus a new life begins. Regeneration is not a mere figure of speech; the power imparted, the means employed, the knowledge acquired, the love aroused, work changes in our very natures; all things become new; we become transformed into another likeness, into the likeness of Christ. We begin to live as never before, and can say, in the words of Paul, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." The divine ideal begins then to be realized within us, as his personality and ours begin to blend.

Christ, then, is ultimate. Employing him discovers him; beholding him produces conformity in type. He is life, not merely as pattern, nor yet as inspiration alone; but he is a transforming power amongst men. Nations most imbued with his spirit advance most rapidly in the civilization and culture of Christian intelligence, philanthropy, and purity; individuals most completely indoctrinated with his principles, while amongst men in very lowly

circumstances, yet dignify their lot and glorify human environment into the conditions of the kingdom of God. That he is the way, the truth and the life is demonstrable, not in theory alone, but on the pages of history and in the private record of many human hearts. The germ of nineteen centuries ago has not yet fully unfolded into the perfect form of the kingdom of God, but the development is in process; the kingdom of God, while still coming, has already come; the ultimate principle has been disclosed.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE RADIANCE OF HIS PERSON.[1]

THAT it was the life of Jesus, the very life, rather than the record of that life, which has influenced the world, enlightening it and redeeming it, is not difficult to discover. The scantiness of the record itself is a fact in evidence. The entire New Testament does not equal in length and comprehensiveness one volume of any of the well-known biographies of famous men, like Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Irving's *Life of Washington*, or Carlyle's *Life of Frederick the Great*. Then, of the twenty-seven books within its covers, only four are directly descriptive of Jesus, in bulk a little less than one-half of the entire New Testament. Then, too, the Gospels duplicate each other in large part. If all that is repeated in parallel passages be eliminated, the narrative, reduced to very small proportions, will present the true dimensions of the recorded history of Jesus, the whole in length scarcely more than equaling one chapter of an ordinary biography. Has such a narra-

1 Some sentences in this chapter are repeated from my "An Introduction to the Life of Jesus."

tive as that, so brief, so fragmentary, so obscure in places, been the means of stirring the world so profoundly as Christianity has? Do the potency and the virtue lie in the record? Impossible. Back of the record, more than parchment, more than phrases, more than history, more than biography, there must be a life.

The record does not reveal all of that life. It is obviously incomplete. Of the sayings of Jesus it has preserved but comparatively few. No book printed, no series of volumes ever published, no manuscripts ever penned, could contain all that any one person, however taciturn, in the course of three years' contact with the people of city and country, would have uttered in conversation and public address, in inquiries and answers, in exhortations and soliloquies, in prayer and praise. But Jesus was not taciturn and uncommunicative. It was his very mission to teach, to preach, to proclaim the kingdom of God as at hand, to reveal himself. Yet he who spake as never man spake, though speaking so wonderfully, had by him no phonograph, no stenographic reporter, no scribe, no private secretary. Those words of his which have been preserved must have burned themselves into the memories of the persons who heard them, as living, glowing samples of the whole. What a multitude

of sayings have been lost! But more than mere words is now transforming the world. Such efficacy lies not in mere language. The life itself was imparted; the life came into the world, and has remained constantly disseminating itself.

Of the works of Jesus, but few are described in the narrative. This is not an assumption, but is indicated in the narrative itself. Of the "mighty works" done in Chorazin and Bethsaida, referred to by Jesus as sufficient to have convicted the wicked cities of Tyre and Sidon, had they been done in them, we know nothing. At the first Passover in Jerusalem "many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did." Of these signs also we have no account whatever. In the last two chapters of the Fourth Gospel, the writer plainly says, "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name;" "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written." Such expressions as these, by one intimately conversant with that life,

though in the hyperbolic language of the Orient, yet plainly show the magnitude of that life as beyond the power of pen or tongue.

There were also many persons believing on Jesus of whom we have no further tidings than a casual allusion in the record. At that first Passover in Jerusalem, just mentioned, "many believed on his name." How many they were, or who they were, or how long they continued in discipleship we have no means of knowing. A short time later the disciples of John the Baptist saw so many coming to Jesus for baptism that they could exclaim in exasperation to their Master, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou hast borne witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him," — a testimony of success not elsewhere amplified. Because of Lazarus many Jews went away and believed on Jesus, and at another time even some of the rulers believed upon him, yet, fearing the Pharisees and loving the glory of men more than the glory of God, did not confess him.

In all these directions the record suggests influences from the life of Jesus upon the men of his time reaching far beyond the mere narrative. It is obvious, therefore, that an exhaustive record of the life of Jesus does not, and could not, exist. The best we have is deficient

in an account of the words, the works, and the personal influence of Jesus as he moved amongst men. The life is plainly more than the record. The life gives radiance and brilliancy and glory to the record. The record condenses and epitomizes; the life was vast and full. The record is fragmentary and presents gaps; the life was continuous. What is recorded must be regarded as but specimens of the whole; the main features are delineated and the chief characteristics are brought out.

During all his ministry Jesus evinced supreme confidence in the efficacy of his own life without external aid or support of any kind. In giving himself to the world he seemed sedulously to avoid outward acts which might in any degree limit his life to mere form. He left behind him no written word. Had he done so, what a "sacred relic" it would have been for glass show cases and long pilgrimages and "holy" ostentation. But with stylus he committed to papyrus or parchment no autobiography, no diary, no memoir, no epistles even. The legend which arose about three hundred years after his crucifixion in regard to a correspondence with Abgarus, king of Syria, has in it no ground of credence whatever. According to that legend Abgarus wrote to Jesus with the request to come to Edessa

and heal the king of a certain disease from which he suffered, and Jesus replied with a letter saying that he himself could not come, but that after his resurrection one of his disciples would come and heal the disease and teach the people. The text of this alleged letter, covering about twenty lines of an ordinary page, is preserved in a Syriac document now in the British Museum in London. But there is not the slightest trustworthy evidence that Jesus ever composed a word of the epistle. It is an invention of a later day. Jesus left no written word. The only incident, probably authentic, of his making letters or hieroglyphics of any kind is at the time when, stooping down, he wrote with his finger on the ground, and said to the woman taken in adultery, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." And yet even this incident is not found in the oldest texts of the New Testament. He bequeathed no literary remains to the world. He gave simply — yet how marvelously — his life; that was to be the radiance of the world.

Jesus did not even add his signature to an account of himself, thereby authenticating the narrative. There was to be no standard, or copyright edition of his life. He directed no one to write his biography. While giving instructions to his disciples to teach and preach

all that he had said and done, he designated no one to act as historian. The little band of followers had its treasurer, but never a secretary. Jesus made no provision for the composition of a record and the preservation of documents. He left simply his life; that, like the leaven, was to be self-propagating. If it was misunderstood, he could calmly suffer it so; if it was to be misrepresented, he was willing to permit all of those possibilities. The life would yet assert itself and banish error. That was stupendous confidence imposed in the future.

It is further noteworthy that Jesus himself baptized no one. While bidding his disciples to baptize, and himself receiving the administration of the rite at the hands of John the Baptist, he seemed unwilling to give occasion for any pretentiousness, ever to claim a special excellence in the descent of baptismal merit through external channels from him. Had he personally baptized, then some men would have arisen to assert that no initiation into his life was valid save that following in direct course through an unbroken succession from him. The life would have been limited within Christo-derivative, baptismal bounds, which he was unwilling to allow. Judaism already had the taint about it of rigid formality and traditionalism. This he would avoid.

It is noticeable, also, that while Jesus gathered about him a band of disciples, who subsequently proved the nucleus of the Christian Church, yet he did not formally organize a church. No mode of organization and government can claim precedent or indorsement from him. "Apostolic" is the highest sanction any ecclesiastical body has ever hoped to deserve. In his presence Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Congregational forms stand alike. The life is limited to no one, but may flow through each, and outside of all.

In giving his life to men, in healing their infirmities, relieving their distresses, Jesus frequently enjoined them strictly not to tell of what he had done. To the leper he said, "See thou tell no man;" the two men who had been blind he charged, "See that no man know it;" when by the Lake of Galilee he healed the people, he "charged them that they should not make him known;" when he had cast out unclean spirits, "he suffered not the demons to speak because they knew them;" when he had raised Jairus's daughter "he charged them much that no man should know this;" the dumb, who found his tongue because of Christ's healing, was bidden to remain silent still as to who had performed the cure; and even when the disciples had confessed him

through the mouth of Peter as "the Christ of God," and when they had beheld the glory of his transfiguration on the mountain, he cautioned them to tell no man, or at least not until after his resurrection. Such prohibitions, so numerous and so strict, seem obviously to indicate that Jesus wished, so long as he himself was amongst men, to be his own means of revelation unto men, not allowing those who had but caught for the first time a glimpse of his character and mere fragments of his life to pass about amongst men the meager, imperfect representations of that life which they then would be sure to give; for the life itself was at hand, to reveal itself, needing then no intermediary, no representation.

There are thirteen such prohibitions recorded in the Gospels, and but one command of a directly opposite character. According to the Gospel of Mark the man in the country of the Gerasenes, from whom a legion of demons had been expelled, was bidden, "Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and how he had mercy on thee." Here there is a message of mercy to be proclaimed. Jesus nowhere posed as a great healer; he was always a man of mercy, a Christ of forgiveness and grace, a Saviour. It is certainly probable that this com-

mand rested upon the man's character, he being one who could appreciate something of the inner, spiritual part of mercy, and probable that it rested also upon the consideration in the Master's mind, that unless that home heard by way of the healed man it might not hear at all of Jesus. To hold men in check until they could once fairly recognize that life of mercy and grace, was to favor the increase of the proper recognition, when once begun; it was to pause a while for the determination of the kind of leaven that should be intrusted to the whole lump.

But the pure radiance of that life can be seen, when we consider that the earliest and greatest conquests made by Christianity were achieved at a time when no record whatever existed, and the life was disseminated solely by preaching and through personal contact. Not one of the twenty-seven documents now constituting the New Testament canon was in existence until a score of years after the crucifixion of Jesus.[1] Then the Epistle of James and the First Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians were penned, with perhaps a year or two between them. None of our present Gospels were in

[1] The world has been saying twenty-three years; within recent months Professor Harnack of Berlin has been urging a period of but eighteen years.

existence until nearly forty years after the death of Jesus, while the last one, the Gospel of John, was probably written fully sixty years after the resurrection. At the time, therefore, when Christianity was making some of its greatest triumphs, the apostles had practically no Bible, certainly no New Testament whatever in its present form. While men were devoid of the Book of appeal and of instruction such as we have, the simple efficacy of the life became the more apparent. While there was no record to vie with the life and usurp its place, the radiance of the life was the more striking.

Peter, when preaching on the day of Pentecost, had no written or printed Gospel from which to preach. Philip, expounding to the eunuch of the south country the significance of messianic prophecies, had no Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John to cite by chapter and verse. Paul, traveling from city to city and proclaiming the message of the cross unto the Gentiles, had no Foreign Bible Society behind him putting into his hands translations of the Gospels for distribution as tracts amongst the heathen; he was without sacred documents save those of the old covenant. Through all these men the life shone with intense, yet simple radiance. Acquainted with Jesus, they preached Jesus; understanding his life, they

disclosed it to others; and possessed by that life, they were enabled to pen records, as the need was felt, and to amplify its application as new demands of human nature and human experience were heard.

But the life was the great fact. In that age without a record the potency of the life became revealed. How it spread! By it three thousand were touched and transformed on the day of Pentecost. Soon a persecution, intended to check the life, simply scattered the possessors of it abroad, and by so much the more disseminated the life. It took root in Phenicia and Cyprus and Antioch. From Antioch, under an epithet at first given in derision, — "Christian," — but soon exalted to honor, with Paul and Barnabas the seed was borne forth to fill the world. With Paul it spread throughout Asia Minor, thence over into Macedonia, thence into Greece, and finally, after a short lapse of time, even unto the Imperial City. What a conquest was that! All this time there was no New Testament, but the life was operative in the minds and hearts of men; churches were multiplied and converts were counted by the thousand. If this was not a divine life, then there have been manifested, in the history of the Christian Church, human phenomena which the world has never elsewhere seen duplicated.

But we must consider yet farther, while numbers were so increasing, what wonderful changes were taking place in the character of the men who were subject to the influence of that potent life. Men like Peter and John, without diploma or degree from the schools of the Rabbis, and to the Jew in consequence "unlearned and ignorant men," spoke with so much boldness and clear discernment that their hearers accounted for the strange eloquence only by saying that "they had been with Jesus." A man like Peter, intensely Jewish in his natural make-up and convictions, became sufficiently broad-minded and liberal to visit Cæsarea, carrying Christian ministrations unto Cornelius, a previously despised Gentile; and, though with some slight lapses, the same disciple ever after retained an open heart for those who believed from amongst the Gentiles. That Peter, impulsive, almost fickle, who, after most emphatic assertion of loyalty and faithfulness, had within a night denied even more emphatically and with an oath that he so much as knew Jesus by sight, became in process of time calm and steadfast, even to the endurance of imprisonment for Christ's sake, yielding up his very life at length by a cruel martyrdom, yet unswerving in his allegiance to his Lord.

Men like the inhabitants of Corinth, accustomed to luxury, prone to sensuality and sordidness, could become pure in purpose, generous in thought and loyal to Christ, as the correspondence of Paul with them shows, despite its obvious reproofs and corrections. The Galatians, though fickle and easily moved from their professions, could nevertheless become stalwart enough to receive stern rebuke and strict instruction, under the apostle's confidence of their profiting thereby. Those Gentile converts addressed in the Epistle to the Ephesians, surrounded and well-nigh charmed by the elegance and pomp and arts of heathen worship, became, nevertheless, transformed into worshipers of the true God, fellow-heirs with the Father's most favored children.

Wonderful, truly stupendous changes were wrought in the people of those early days by the effect of the life, reflected through the medium of human lives, — changes which though happily not confined to that age, yet enable us to see most clearly the resplendent radiance of the life and its mighty effects when operative alone. Everywhere it gave mental and spiritual enlightenment. Once those humble Galilean peasants were not able to receive the utterances of Jesus and he had been obliged to withhold many a declaration he would fain

have given; but how their capacity subsequently increased and how the revelations then came to them under the guidance of the Spirit! They so grew and expanded as at length to become, to all subsequent ages, the medium of communication concerning the Christ who had appeared to them in the flesh and had held discourse and instruction with them for three years. Fishermen became ambassadors and heralds; peasants became the custodians of the greatest, deepest, broadest philosophy the world has ever known; unlearned and ignorant men were fitted to be the religious guides and sacred historians of the world, and coming generations have looked back to their utterances and examples as the oracles of God.

It was a wonderful life that could enlighten men to such an extent. Human powers and capabilities have not repeated such marvelous mental and spiritual changes, as were wrought in those simple Galilean fishermen, and all history has no precedent to offer. It was distinctly, as Jesus himself said, unto the poor that the Gospel had been preached, and yet these very people, poor and destitute of human resources, accomplished, not through slow lapse of years but with startling celerity, almost immediately, wherever they went, the most stupendous results in influencing their fellowmen

and in affecting human institutions: results which could never have been effected by the most perfect system and organization that man's unaided wisdom has ever devised, by the influence and prestige of kings and rulers, by the force of the largest combinations of men the world has ever known, or by the employment of all the capital and wealth the world has been able to heap together. Yet a re-creation of individuals, a transformation of communities, and a remolding of human thought and expectation were accomplished through the early Christians. It was the life of Christ which wrought these mighty effects in men, through the instrumentality of very ordinary, weak mortals. Indeed the weakness of the instruments but the more clearly displays the efficiency of the power.

And then through these unpromising channels what further modifications, after lapse of time, were accomplished in society! The life became gradually so widely disseminated that the home felt its influence, governments became remodeled, law took on new expressions, commercial transactions evinced different principles, and literature acquired new standards and felt the throb of an entirely new purpose. The life was the light of humanity, and so permeated humanity as to give it, not new appear-

ances and new forms only, but also a new character and a new nature.

With these facts in mind three brief corollaries now thrust themselves upon the attention :—

(1). Since the life has been the light of the world, we need feel no anxiety for the perpetuity of the church of Christ, and need not yield for a moment to discouragement concerning her work. Despite the fact of Sabbath desecration, despite the prevalence of crime and lust and sin, despite forgetfulness of moral obligations and denials of God, despite the mass of horrid human actions, which a sensational press daily brings beneath our eyes, yet we must not think that the world is growing worse, that the church is failing in her mission, and that Christianity is not gaining ground. Sensational news is news simply because it is exceptional. Christian virtues have become commonplace. The life has come into the world, and what it has called into existence it can surely preserve. Were the church universal to be swept away in a moment, still would the life remain; that was operative before there was a church; it does not secure its strength from the church, but rather the church has drawn all her strength from the life; so long, therefore, as she continues to

draw her sustenance from Christ, her life and usefulness are assured.

(2). Emphasis upon the life gives to the Bible its rightful significance. The life is first and chief; the Bible is not to be worshiped, nor to be so revered as to become an end in itself; its service is to bring man to the life. Man, then, must not bow down to the letter; he must reach out for the life; and, if he finds the life, he will then cease to fear for the book; he will have confidence that the life will guard its own. Hostility cannot destroy that which the life pervades. What God wills to stand must stand. Criticism will accomplish one of two results, — either it will completely demonstrate its own folly, or it will cause men to better understand that which the life, as the light of men, illumines. If, then, we at all discern the power of the life, we may have confidence in that which manifests the life.

(3). In preaching and exhortation unto others and unto ourselves we ought to lay greater stress upon the life, and the necessity of seeking that alone. We need not aim primarily at an understanding of the Bible, or at the acquirement of a perfect system of theology. The Christ will explain the Bible quite as much as the Bible will explain the Christ; and the light of life is a better revelation of sound

doctrine than is sound doctrine of the life. Creeds are not so essential as the life; one can be saved without a creed, but one cannot be saved without a Saviour. The life coming unto a human heart may propound a hundred questions and arouse a thousand misgivings, leading to multitudinous doubts and mysteries, but the questions and misgivings and mysteries do not concern the soul that truly finds Christ. As Christ enters into that soul the shadows must flee away. As Christ is the light of the world, so is he the light of the single soul. The confidence springing from his presence gives peace. His radiance quickens, refreshes, revives the best in the human heart, and banishes evil.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE ABOUNDING LIFE.

LIFE and the products of life are exceedingly abundant about us, far more abundant than is usually realized.

The life of the vegetable kingdom enters into our edifices in every beam, board, and shingle; is in our clothing and furnishings of cotton, linen, and lace; in pulp, it becomes paper and books, boxes and dishes, pails and chairs, floors and walls, and even the car-wheels on the railroad. It furnishes at least eight-tenths of our food. The animal kingdom is scarcely less indispensable to man; it is not only a main source of food supply, but also gives to our floors carpets, to our plastering hair, to the jointures of our furniture glue, to us and to all things for covering it gives furs, skin, wool, and leather; it furnishes bone and horn; it makes contributions to our instruments of music, whether of wind or string.

Animalculæ swarm in the tiniest drop of water, fatten in the microscopic dust, and jostle

each other in every breath we breathe; they penetrate the tissues of our bodies, hold assemblage under our finger-nails, and high carnival on our teeth. An American dentist in Germany has made himself world-famous amongst dentists by a learned work upon the bacteria of the teeth. Indeed bacteriology contributes more to nosology and therapeutics now than any other branch of science. A bacillus has been found for almost every disease. In the filtering establishment of the Berlin water-works one may see drops of water kept under favorable conditions for the cultivation of microbes in order to discover in larger size both their number and their kind, that the relative purity of the water supply may be determined daily and the health of the people be guarded. Every laboratory for the scientific study of sanitation, disinfection, and other subjects allied with the public health, is equipped now with appliances for the investigation of microscopic life. Life, indeed, in some form is so abundant that the scientist can scarcely find a place or a condition where it is not, when wishing to conduct experiments without its insistent presence and perplexing complications. Darwin and Wallace, separately, spent months of experimenting to obtain a single cubic inch of atmosphere totally germless, that they might know, and might tell the world,

whether there could be by any possibility a spontaneous generation, or whether all life came solely from antecedent life. Successful at length in eliminating life, they found that life in any form could come only from life, and that the abundance everywhere and in everything was not due to spontaneity of generation, but to parental or antecedent reproduction and propagation.

The prevailing characteristics of all these forms of life are two: self-preservation and self-propagation. The former means prolonged existence for the individual; the latter means prolonged existence of the species; or, in other words, that, when the individual can no longer survive, then his offspring shall preserve his kind. The one involves self-protection, an instinct in the lower orders, causing a ceaseless conflict and ruthless destruction of others that self may live; the other, the perpetuation of the species, causing death also, resulting usually from the process of reproducing life. Many plants die when they have brought seed to perfection; in many forms of animal life, likewise, the individual perishes on reproducing itself in its young. Procreation severely taxes the vitality of all forms, from the lowest to the highest.

These are the laws of natural life, and upon these laws Herbert Spencer has founded his

system of ethics. Holding that man, like all other orders of life, exists for the twofold object of preserving his individual existence and of propagating his kind, Spencer declares that the essence of right and wrong lies in the maintenance of the abundance of life by these two ways, — the preservation of oneself and the propagation of one's kind; that the true ethical standard is to be found in answer to the questions: What perpetuates life? What favors begetting and rearing offspring? This foundation of ethics is set forth, applied, and illustrated in Spencer's *Data of Ethics*. One school of nineteenth century philosophy, therefore, holds up as the highest ideal revealed to man, *to have life and to have it abundantly*. Strangely enough, this is also the language of Christ in expressing at one time his mission among men, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."

It is a curious coincidence that Spencerian ethics and Christian ethics, that agnosticism and faith, that Herbert Spencer and Jesus Christ can employ the same language and preach from the same text. But here, as in all else, mere externals are not a safe criterion of inward contents; phrases may sound alike yet be indeed the vehicles of entirely different thought; identity in language is no proof

of identity or even of similarity in thought and intention. Motive is more than deeds and meaning more than words.

Spencer thinks of this life. His glance is backward. He reads the record of anatomy, morphology, and physiology; he sees the past which this life has had, but he sees for it no future. "To have life" is to have it here, and to have it in three modes, — physical, mental, and social. "To have life more abundantly" is to increase it in the following directions: to make the health better and the body more robust; to augment intellectual vigor and attainments; to allow others in seeking to increase their own life to its fullness free opportunity so to do; and to beget offspring who shall continue this same vital round. These are the Spencerian directions of ethical possibility and obligation.

But the abounding life of Jesus is more abundant than Spencer means. It includes all forms of the material life of men and extends much farther. It must be remembered that religion does not array itself against science and philosophy; it is only a certain kind of religionists who set up a conflict. The domains of Christianity are so vast that all true science and all true philosophy have a home within her jurisdiction. There may be a conflict between

religion and so-called science; there may be a conflict between science and so-called religion; but Christianity never conflicts with truth. Where man knows truth, his knowledge harmonizes with all other truth. Much that Spencer avers is undoubtedly true; it has the accord of other truth. Science, if true, is as true as religion, and religion, if true, can be no truer. God is one; truth is his nature. If Spencer has a part of truth, he has so much knowledge of the being and will of God.

Wherein truth is spoken, Spencer's words accord with the teaching of Jesus. Jesus Christ means that we shall have physical life and that it shall abound.

Amongst the Jews sound health is, and ever has been, notorious. Modern science has recently discovered that those animals forbidden by the Mosaic law, as food, are among the animals most liable to parasitic forms of life, engendering such diseases as rabies and trichinosis. The Jewish methods of slaughtering animals, which carefully eliminate the blood from the flesh, remove one prolific breeding-place of bacilli. Even circumcision has hygienic claims. And so the preparation for Christianity was one that touched the physical life.

But Christ and Christian principles even more clearly and completely advocate and pro-

mote sound health. The sins of the flesh are all condemned by Christ; they all produce disease and unsoundness. Temperance, quietness, peace, joy, hope, faith, — fruits of the spirit, — are as beneficial to the body as to the soul. He who forbade useless worry and anxiety for the morrow gave a prescription for health and happiness for both to-day and to-morrow. He who healed bodies nineteen centuries ago in Palestine, heals them no less truly in America to-day. It is not, however, a healing accompanied by unction, gush, excitement; nor by oil, the imposition of hands, and the utterance of petitions which in their insistent, exorbitant, and selfish demands often travesty prayer; but a healing unattended by commotion, unheralded by spectacular demonstration, frequently, indeed, unknown and unrecognized by the patient, and yet no less truly Christ's mighty work; it is the healing derived from trust, from obedience and from Christian living, the result of following the Great Physician's directions, not for a moment to tide over a crisis, but for a lifetime, as regulative of all acts and thoughts and states.

Were there not just laws of retribution operative constantly, these gracious physical advantages to the Christian would be more frequently apparent; but oftentimes penalties must be

borne in the flesh for sins or errors in the individual himself or in a long line of ancestry, for which no repentance and no atonement can provide a remedy. The laws of God are not at variance. Each has its domain. But the laws of Christ, heartily and consistently obeyed, mean for men most certainly an increased soundness of body. We are temples for the indwelling of the divine; and when the divine has control of his own habitation, we may well believe that he will make that habitation wholesome and sound.

It has often been supposed that Jesus Christ himself was not a good example of physical health. Medieval art may be responsible for the opinion, for it has delineated him as wan, pale, sickly, emaciated, and haggard. But that, doubtless, is a caricature, false though pious. He was no gaunt, religious enthusiast. There is not a note of unreality, unwholesomeness, or unsoundness in all his teaching. His words have the ring of vigor, robustness, and strength. Was he weak and puny — he, born of a woman chosen out of all Israel, his father divine? Surely hereditary influences from such sources were good. Was he frail and feeble, he, who, in open air, a carpenter by trade till thirty, walked from Galilee to Judea, and from Judea to Galilee, repeating the journey again and

again? he, who pushed on to Tyre and Sidon, and also out beyond Jordan? Did he lack strength, he, who could endure forty days of fasting, and then the mental and spiritual rack of that satanic temptation? Were those nerves unstrung, and that physique shattered, that could survive the heart-breaking agony of the Garden of Gethsemane, and then permit their possessor to remain patient and forgiving under the taunts and tortures of his accusers and crucifiers?

That he was weary by Jacob's Well in Samaria, that he slept in the storm-tossed boat on Lake Gennesaret, that he was hungry after his resurrection, and ate food, but prove the reality of his human body, not its frailty. Isaiah's language, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him," has been thought to apply to the physical appearance of Jesus; but Isaiah was writing of the servant of Jehovah, the faithful remnant of Israel, and not of the coming Messiah.

He who could at sight draw young children to him, who was attractive also to men as well as to women, won not only by his eyes and smile, but must have had charm also in manly bearing and physique. There is no reason, therefore, why we should not conclude with

confidence that by example and by teaching Jesus meant to promote an abounding life in the physical man.

That he meant a mental life, likewise, and its increase is evident from the method of instruction which he employed, and the effects of his person upon men of all time. The parables in which he spoke are not a crutch to thought, as some people suppose; they are not easy, but hard to understand. The disciples begged him to explain the parables to them, and he complied. Parables are incentives and stimulants to thought; they require mental activity. By them attention is secured, comparisons must be instituted, and inductions drawn. To hear his parables is to take a lesson in logic. Unless men opened their minds, and stirred their souls, they could receive nothing from him. He required attention and thoughtfulness first of all.

Jesus widened the mental horizon of his hearers. He made them observe ordinary things, seen, but unobserved before; he told them of relations always existing, but hitherto ignored; caused them to think as a neighbor thought; reminded them of past history, taught them present truth, and pointed them to a distant and resplendent future. His teaching involved the principles and not the rules of religion. His was not a code to read or memo-

rize; no casuist he. Every disciple must believe, think, assimilate, and, assimilating, shape his course by mental and spiritual appreciation of the truth.

The palpable effects of Christ's life upon his followers is evidence of what he means to be normal among his disciples of all time. It has caused wonderment that humble fishermen became seers and prophets, that a tax-gatherer should become a world-famous historian. But it is not so strange after all. The apostles were mentally awakened, and spiritually aroused to their full capacity. The possibilities are stupendous when a man's full intellectual and spiritual powers are called into exercise.

The testimony of subsequent history, also, shows the expansive power of Christianity on the mind. The nations most Christ-like have become the most intellectual. The people taking in the most of Christian principle and motive imbibe the most of civilization and culture. Where the record of the life has gone, there the printing press and school have followed. Where the church has been planted, there the academy and the college have sprung up.

Jesus plainly intended that the mind should develop. He went away saying, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them

now," and he promised that the Spirit should guide them into all truth, calling to remembrance all things that he had said unto them. Expansion by enlargement, and fuller possession by attainment, he manifestly intended for his followers. Although men still subscribe to statements which their ecclesiastical grandfathers wrote, assenting to views the validity of which they have not once probed for themselves, and accept far-reaching doctrines and skillfully fashioned creeds without prying into, digging out, and opening up truth for their own minds; yet this is not the intention of Jesus. He meant for the human mind enlargement in the appreciation and assimilation of truth. The grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in which the Apostle Peter exhorted his hearers to grow, has been as yet by no means exhausted.

But Jesus Christ enlarges also the social life. "Am I my brother's keeper?" is no less a pre-Christian than a pre-Mosaic question, underlying both the law and the Gospel. Christianity is distinctly a religion of fraternal obligation and social contact. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" was the second of the Lord's two great commandments. We discover but half of Christianity when we see only our relation to God through Christ; but

the other half is as plainly declared, our relation to humanity through Christ; he spoke of both and taught both. Giving a cup of cold water, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick and prisoners are services done unto him. Such conduct, if performed in his name, constitutes a part of Christianity.

The Jew has always honored the family. His Bible, and ours, declares at the outset its institution as divinely designed; the Jew's inspired singer, and ours, has said that "children are an heritage of the Lord and blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them." Jesus himself has sanctioned and hallowed the family as a social center. He himself entered a family and spent ten-elevenths of his earthly years within a home. He sanctioned marriage and made its obligations more binding than even the Mosaic code had done. He found solace and shelter in the home of Martha and Mary; he attended the wedding feast at Cana; he restored the dead to parents and sisters.

Jesus did not live apart from men, but amongst them, in the cities even, where the multitudes were. He was no recluse and no ascetic. Hermits and monks and celibate priests are burlesques, rather than patterns, of Christianity. He sanctioned social life, life amongst men; he taught its improvement and

gave principles which modern minds and hearts are but just beginning to comprehend and apply.

"And who is my neighbor?" asked the lawyer. By parable and teaching, Jesus replied, "Every one who is in need, whom you can help, whether you like or dislike the man, whether he esteems or despises you; his need and your ability to help constitute the social bonds between you. Go thou and do likewise." This is his social standard; this is one commandment of Christ for social life. In some places the church is but just now dreamily opening her eyes to this direction of her mission, but it is not new in the words and the works of Jesus.

Thus far the teachings of Herbert Spencer and Jesus Christ are in agreement. Rest, recreation, athletics, and physical culture are Christian as well as scientific. Reading and study, thought and philosophy, school, college and university, science and learning are sanctioned by Jesus Christ, no less definitely than by the highest exponents of this world's wisdom. Charity, benevolence, philanthropy, a recognition of social sorrows and social joys, and participation in the affairs of government and politics are for the Christian even more than for the agnostic, because the Christian, fired with the enthusiasm for humanity which springs

from a sense of duty as well as of love for man, can best affiliate with all social conditions.

The ethics of Christ are seen, therefore, to overlay the ethics of Spencer. All that Spencer means Christ means, and more. Spencer has no place for the great dynamic, the personal pronoun. The omission is characteristic of such ethics and philosophy; they leave deity out of their reckoning. Agnosticism makes a place for God but puts no God in the place prepared.

The worldly philosophy exhorts, have physical life and have it abundantly. Jesus Christ says, have life and have it abundantly, not merely because it is the law of nature, of which protoplasm and polyp partake, but because I, your example and inspiration, wish you to have generous physical resources for your own better satisfaction, for greater usefulness unto others, and for the highest glory of God; be a type in brawn and muscle of the best that God has made, and employ this brawn and muscle in manner pleasing to him.

The worldly philosophy says, have mental life and have it abundantly. Jesus Christ responds, have mental life and have it abundantly, not to quibble, to disparage and to doubt concerning the great mysteries of the ages, but to investigate, discover, apprehend,

and apply truth to self, to man, and to God; from the present and from the past, for the present and for the future, enlarge the mental and spiritual outlook, magnify that spiritual nature, God-designed, God-made, and enter into fellowship with me, the revelation of God, thereby to behold with me the eternal truths of righteousness and grace.

Worldly philosophy pronounces for social life and its abundance. Jesus Christ approves and adds, have social life, have it abundantly, but not merely that you yourself may live and your offspring may survive you; and, as a necessary condition to your own and your offspring's undisturbed and peaceful existence, that others of the race may have the same privileges of preserving self and protecting their young; but live for others, be willing to die for others — "he that loseth his life for my sake shall save it" — save by spending, increase by giving, gain by sacrificing, save and serve others; follow my example; so shall you truly live.

The warmth of Christ's appeal, the glow of his call issue from his person. Live, live, he cries; to the utmost enlarge thyself, to the utmost use thyself, to the utmost give thyself. What magnetism in his person! "I am come, that ye may have life, and may have it abundantly." This is the deepest secret of his mes-

sage, "I am come." Here I am, the way, the truth and the life; partake of me. He who believes in me as the Son of God and Saviour of men, he who patterns after me as the perfect plan God designed for human lives, he who accepts from me all that I by my sacrifice of love, as man and God, have achieved between man and God, he shall live, live not merely in body, not merely in mind, not merely among men, but a life of communion with God, both here and hereafter, constantly becoming transformed into the diviner likeness. Without me no such life is possible. Without me men have sought to live and have perished; all religions without me fail, both for this life and in the promise of a future life; all philosophies without me grovel amid the weaknesses, the sins, and the doubts of men; all systems without me raise questions unanswerable, cause longings unappeased, leave fears irremediable.

Christianity is more than dogma. Jesus does not give us opinions, but life. No man need believe a statement, or feel required to do this or that deed, or be of one or another disposition, simply because a man, be he priest or prophet, or a body of men, whether church, council, or synod, make this or that declaration; but only because his mind and conscience, grasping the ideal, bid him believe, do, and be. All that con-

cerns a man, to be a part of him, must spring from within him; it becomes then his life. Those are thieves and robbers who dogmatize and take away the moral and spiritual activity of our own free choice and independent appreciation and assimilation.

Belief in Christ brings Christ into the soul; like a new scion set in an old tree, belief in Christ takes of the old life, draws it up into the new, and little by little, utilizing the natural forces and activities of the natural man, transforms them and him from one life into another, from the production of mere natural excellences and virtues into bearing the new, the better, the Christian fruit. Belief then performs its high and noble function, becomes vital in man, lives within him, and makes him by transformation live within it and thus unto Christ.

This new, this higher life, like all life, can come only from antecedent life; there can be no spontaneous generation; it is from Christ. It is his purpose, his mission, his very life to give life.

In the animal kingdom self-preservation involves usually the death of others. In the spiritual kingdom the preservation of life in one brings an increase of life to all; there is no destruction of others for the sake of self, there is no irrepressible conflict, no survival of the

fittest; all who have the life in any measure are fit, and all survive, each helping the others.

In the animal kingdom procreation involves often death, always suffering and loss of vitality; in the spiritual kingdom to transmit life, to live in others by influence, by personal example, by precept, by power, by inspiration, and by service is but to live the more, to lose nothing, but rather to enlarge one's own spiritual vitality. By the life which Christ gives, we live with satisfaction to ourselves and usefulness to others in this life, and thence live on with fullness of life hereafter. But all this life is in progressive forms, unfolding a higher always from a lower as the plan of the Master's operation shows.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PLAN OF OPERATION.

Consecutiveness, the significance of which has been taught us by the scientist, is a word which we are finding to-day may be appropriately applied to most, if not all, processes and changes. The keen observer discovers few real beginnings, and the number constantly decreases. He finds, instead, continuance of what long since came forth from an antecedent. What he once termed a beginning is in many instances now understood as a mere modification of what previously existed.

In the study of history, events are no longer regarded as isolated occurrences; and history is no longer written as beads are strung upon a ribbon; but in the study of the past there has come to be recognized a well-defined philosophy of history, which discerns in all the record of the human race, streams of progress, development of tendencies and modification of characteristics.

Our modern pedagogy enunciates with ever increasing clearness, Aristotle's declaration that

"all intellectual teaching is based upon what is previously known to the person taught," the truth of which all who have taught know full well.

The last-born science, sociology, intent upon knowing society's conditions, in tabulating motives, forces, and facts, is a science solely as it appreciates the inevitable consecutiveness of all of society's changes, the concatenation of social cause and effect. The recognition of an order of development in modern society is fast transforming generous, impulsive, unthinking charity into a calmer, truer, more Christian philanthropy, and is making Christ-like scientists of us all.

Christ-like scientists, I say, for the Master long since enunciated the principle which the scientist, historian, teacher, and reformer, chiefly from scientific sources, are at length learning. Christianity in relation to its past, in relation to the race, to nations and to individuals, enters as a coördinating, connected and consecutive factor. Preserving the good of the past, it enlarges, modifies, purifies, transforms the present, and thus produces a new creature for the future. It does not destroy, it fulfills.

Our Lord revealed on earth heaven's plan of operation. He came not to destroy the standards, precepts, and commandments already

sacred to the people, not even to disparage them, still less to ignore them, but to restore their meaning to the original divine dimensions, to enlarge their applications as they worthily required, and to extend them into the depths and heights that evince their accord with the perpetual and universal truth of God.

The Jew believed in one God. Jesus reiterated and reaffirmed the unity of God, yet gave the world the data of the Trinity.

The Jew believed in Jehovah as propitious only to the Jew. While acquiescing in this belief by affirming that "salvation is of the Jews" and that his mission was primarily to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," yet Jesus declared the fatherhood of God wide enough to embrace all who receive the spiritual sonship proffered, of whatever race or tongue, and indeed comprehensive enough to include, through God's mercy and love shown in creation and the offer of redemption, all mankind. The Jew dared scarcely utter "Father," though at times vaguely entertaining the thought of Jehovah's fatherhood. It was Jesus who taught his disciples always to say "Our Father," when they prayed.

Jesus preserved the election typical of Judaism, yet so enlarged its conditions as essentially to change its character. The old dispensation might be called Calvinistic, while the

new was Calvinio-Arminian. Under the old, divine favors were bestowed, it was at first believed, upon one single condition, namely Hebrew descent; in order to inherit the promises, a man must be a child of Abraham. This was the election of a race. But a new condition at length was recognized: even a Jew might fail of divine favor, if he ceased to obey and worship God. The later prophets made it plain that Jehovah required more than mere Abrahamic descent, more even than mere sacrifice and an outward compliance with the law, — an inward act, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God. The emphasis was in process of shifting for centuries. Jesus continued and accelerated this change of emphasis, his chief requirements being belief, love, obedience, full allegiance of the heart with its attendant service.

In olden days set forms, ceremonies, sacrifices, and the externals of religious observances were too often deemed sufficient for pleasing God. Jesus did not abrogate form, ceremony, and sacrifice. He performed and rendered them all in a fuller, deeper sense, as for sacrifice, becoming himself the efficient offering for all time and for all men. He laid stress upon that which externals signified. With works he demanded also the inward operations of faith and love. The Sermon on the Mount shows

how, while still preserving the requirements of the law, Jesus added to them and fulfilled them. Jesus Christ himself, therefore, entered into the stream of progress ; he himself exemplified the principle of consecutiveness ; he became an exponent of the method of evolution.

It would not be a difficult task to show how, since the days of Christ, Christianity has always developed according to the same principle. No age, no century, no religious upheaval, no commotion has been isolated and detached. Each change has had its cause, in part at least, not far before it, in its natural antecedents. Men have discovered that truth is not fragmentary, but continuous ; the revelation of truth is not spasmodic, but progressive ; and the appreciation of truth is not often an ecstasy, but more frequently a growth.

One means of discerning how faithfully the principle of consecutiveness was carried out by Jesus will be found in observing how tolerant he was of abuses which at the same time he came to reform. He was a king, establishing a kingdom, potent enough to dictate to all the powers of the earth and even marshall by his side the legions of heaven ; yet he assumed control of no government, himself yielded acquiescence to the decrees of the rulers, teaching his followers, also, to render unto Cæsar the

things that pertained to Cæsar: he repudiated for himself the title and the crown of a king. He allowed evils in government to continue, and yet he introduced the principles which gradually, yet surely, by growth and consecutive development, should remedy evils, correct abuses, and rectify mismanagement.

He came to manumit the slave; and yet his Gospel issued no proclamation of immediate emancipation. The slave was even bidden to serve his master more faithfully and to remain content with his lot; yet how surely, through the lapse of centuries, the teaching of Jesus was bringing to pass freedom for all mankind!

Our Lord made wine, that superior wine of such excellent quality as to astonish the expert who presided at the banquet; and yet, while thus entering into the customs of the times, accepting conditions as they were, he taught ever emphatically that temperance is always imperative, that abstinence, if for no other reason than to avoid offense to others, is necessary, that the body is a temple for the indwelling of God, and that all the physical and mental faculties must be kept clear and unclouded for service both to God and to man.

Fasting was in vogue when Jesus was on earth. John and his disciples fasted oft; Jesus and his disciples did not fast, and were taunted

in consequence by unbelieving Jews as gluttonous and winebibbers. While not himself fasting, yet he neither condemned nor approved fasting. Once in the Authorized Version of the English Bible there appears a seeming indorsement of fasting, in the phrase uttered when Jesus descended from the Mount of Transfiguration and found the disciples unable to heal the paralytic boy: "This kind goeth not out save by prayer and fasting." But in the Revised Version the word "fasting" disappears, as it ought on textual authority; and in all the New Testament there really appears no approval of the custom. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says simply, "Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces that they may be seen of men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face; that thou be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father which seeth in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee." It is as though he had said, If ye choose to fast, then fast, but make no sanctimonious show of it to attract the attention of men.

Sickness in the days of Jesus was thought by the people to be due to possession by demons. Jesus did not turn aside from his ministry of

reconciliation to impart instruction in nosology, the science of the causes of disease, nor in therapeutics, the science of healing. He simply healed the sick and let medical science develop in its time.

It is very plain that Jesus entered into the life of men as a consecutive factor. He took the times as they were, and life as it was, and religion as it was. He did not institute a revolution by proclaiming anarchy; he did not clear the field by compulsion. He observed conditions then existing; he entered into circumstances as they were. His were changes wrought from within outwardly, and not of that kind which skim the surface without affecting the interior. His was the method of evolution, and the principles he employed are profoundly instructive for his disciples to-day.

In the first place, a standard by which to judge both men and measures is presented to us. We are required to try the spirits, to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good. We certainly need some criterion by which to make our tests. Here is such a criterion. Constructiveness, not destructiveness, is a reliable touchstone. Does a man or measure simply scout the past, repudiate the present, denounce, reject, destroy? Then, we may well regard such

a man or measure with suspicion. Iconoclasm befits not the times of Anglo-Saxons. Renan, the late French apostle of myths, said wisely, in the preface to his personal memoirs, "The true men of progress are those who have for their starting-point a profound respect for the past."

A man who derides what others have done and are doing, who sees good in nothing save that which he himself achieves, is generally a man whose outlook is limited and whose activities are partial, onesided, and unreliable. A man who upsets, overthrows, and seeks to destroy what already exists, cannot himself possess a large share of truth and utility. From the nature of the case he not only expends his time and resources in destructiveness, but still worse, fails so to relate his efforts and achievements to previous accomplishments as to give stability and permanence to his work. While the "assentator," as the old Romans used to term the man who always said "yes, yes," is not to be trusted, because, if not designedly seeking to flatter, he at least lacks convictions of his own, yet the dissentator, — to coin a word, — is still less to be trusted, for, lacking wisdom to discern that which may be good about him, he does not allow the wisdom of others to have effect. The flatterer and cheap

henchman magnify and extend the influence of their leaders, adding by their influence, however small, some potency to constructive plans and purposes; while the habitual denier isolates himself, limits his own energies, and attains no permanent result, for even if successful in his destructiveness, he has simply heaped the ground with ruins.

It seems to be a fashion in some quarters to seek notoriety through negations, some persons seeming to consider it an evidence of thinking better than their predecessors to repudiate what their predecessors have thought. Young people ought to seek as friends those whose conversation is filled with words of appreciation and approval for the good there is in the world, rather than those who but criticise, censure, and denounce. A carping, chronic fault-finder is, from the philosophical point of view, a fool rather than a wise man. If one finds a principle or an organization, the constant tendency of which seems to be to deny and destroy, no better counsel could be given than to avoid it. To what service divine providence can put a church, or a sect, or a man whose chief activity is debate, whose effects are divisive and schismatic, it is difficult to determine. Constructiveness, consecutiveness, development, growth, these words describe a principle which the

wisest minds of all ages have found in the facts of man, nature, and revelation.

But, besides giving us a standard by which to judge of men and measures, the principles involved in the method of the Master present us with a model to imitate. The Christ entered into existing conditions. Divine truth is not revolutionary; it is gentle and pervasive. We need not say that it simply assimilates unto itself, but rather it allows itself to be assimilated and absorbed. Truly, the human mind has had revealed to it such facts as a divine conformity to the world, a divine compliance with customs and practices of the day, a divine adaptation to specific surroundings, and even a divine expediency that is willing to lose itself in that which it blesses.

The whole mission of Christ upon earth is illustrative of this descent from the higher to the lower for the sake of the lower, that the lower might by gradual, consecutive changes rise toward the higher. Humanity climbs toward divinity because divinity first condescended to come down unto humanity. They teach well who bend to the level of the ignorant. They live well who adapt their highest ideals to the hardest exigencies of stern reality. They are Christ-like who maintain their Christianity by living practically their faith in all the walks of

life, evenly, sweetly, consecutively in all experiences.

Monasticism and the monkish spirit are flatly contradictory to this model. As Jesus mingled with men and entered into the ways of men, so the Christian disciple needs to continue in the ordinary routine of life, making all life Christian. Seclusion, separation, and sanctimoniousness are not sanctioned by the Master's example. It was, and ever has been, absurd for monks and nuns to withdraw into their caves and convents; but it is no less absurd now for men to limit themselves to Sunday services for their religious exercises and experiences, and not to take these exercises and experiences with them into all the affairs of the week. There is not so grave danger to-day that the Sabbath will be desecrated by unbelievers as that week days will not be hallowed by believers. It is the monkish spirit that thinks Christianity is not practical for business and housekeeping, for school and college, for the farm and shop, and all tasks of ordinary life, but can thrive only within sacred precincts and under certain artificial circumstances away from the common course of life. Too many men in this spirit permit their religious experiences to become isolated aspirations on one day in the week, separated from all other like aspira-

tions by the chilling period of six "secular" days.

But Christian lives should be made consecutive. They should be maintained warm and vital every hour. No tasks are mean, none need be uncongenial, to righteousness. Christianity may be adapted without harm to every circumstance in which necessity places a disciple, and to a very large majority of the circumstances which the disciple may select whether for pleasure or profit. It is Christ-like to be a Christian while in the world and among men.

In its efforts to relieve distress, rectify evils, and institute the reforms of the present day, society needs also to learn to imitate the example of Jesus. Patience first of all is needed. Changes, if of value and destined to accomplish real benefit, must develop slowly, striking deep root, into the very nature of the men or things affected. The reformer must recognize present conditions before he can expect to see modifications according to his desires. Sympathy must knit him to the present before he can change the present.

It has been discovered in these latter days that money alone does not relieve poverty, but may aggravate it; that opportunities for work do not of themselves bring thrift and comfort to improvident households; that tracts and

Bibles will not alone carry cheer and gladness into godless homes. Something additional is needful; that is sympathy, the actual touch of one human soul upon another. The only way really to give is to give of one's self. It is the bestowment of self that determines whether all other gifts are means of relief or are actual occasions of offense. Christ came among men; conserving the good he found, he made it better, and gave it life that it might itself grow, extend, develop, and know the full potency of itself and its divine impartation. In seeking any reform it is necessary to recognize the principle of consecutiveness, *what is* being the starting point and *what is* being also the consideration to determine the exact form that efforts for modification shall assume.

Then, further, by the method he employed, Christ has given the world a means of forecasting the future of Christianity. Inasmuch as religion expands consecutively, the prophet of to-day, by looking far enough into the past, can discover the direction of expansion, and estimate the course and rate of progress. A famous orator of our colonial days declared, "I have no way of judging of the future, except by the past." It is this manner of judging of Christianity's prospects which the method of the Master affords.

The past shows wonderful progress. Christianity does not seek mere lip-service. If her devotees ever have been content with that, they have had what they sought, an ephemeral success; but the permanent gains of Christianity are of the kind that do not depend upon mere profession; they must develop from the heart, and find expression in character. Such gains are necessarily slow. When the obstacles in the way of Christianity are considered, — the centuries of inherited institutions behind it, the deeply fixed tendencies and evils around it, the false religions to overcome, and this, too, not by violence and force, but gently, as the sunshine overcomes miasma, — the gains have been marvelous.

The followers of Jesus at first were but a dozen, and these had scarcely caught a glimpse of his truth and his spirit when he was taken away. But the numbers soon took on a rapid growth. Despite misconceptions, perversities, monstrosities, exaggerations, fanatical delusions, enemies within and without, Christianity grew in the apostolic days at a marvelous rate of increase. The new faith outlived opposition, survived persecution, survived the greater dangers of royal patronage, outlived the dark ages, and in the midst of the insidious evils of modern civilization still preserves its essential charac-

teristics, sinking constantly deeper into the consciousness of the race, and taking firmer hold upon the lives of men.

The history of the Christian religion reads like a miracle, when one considers both its hindrances and the weakness of the human vessels to which it was intrusted. How a student of history can be a pessimist, it is difficult to see. A thoughtful review of but a single century discloses rapid strides and marked improvement in almost every respect. Let one investigate the subjects of law, crime, drunkenness, slavery, the condition of woman, the purity of the family, love of truth, respect for private possessions, and one will be impressed with the wonderful advancement; while a yet wider view of the past, from the time of the advent of Christ, brings out in still clearer relief the remarkable development of the world toward truth and righteousness and God.

The world is growing better, the tendency is toward the light; and the consecutiveness of the past, running through the present, forecasts a brighter future. Whatever changes are in store cannot be destructive. Divine power has come into the world, and not to destroy but to fulfill. The constructive are more than all the destructive forces. Past and present are filled

with the forces of a divine life working out the world's redemption.

The church at large is more active in good works to-day than ever before, more earnest in evangelization, more potent in preaching, more practical and sympathetic in ministration, more Christ-like in every respect. The auxiliary organizations multiply her resources and increase her efficiency in every direction.

Surely the outlook is bright. Golden opportunities are at hand. Unto the church the purpose, the plan, and the efficiency of a divine person have been given, of a person who leads onward consecutively into truth and unto victory, till all the gracious thoughts of an infinite love shall have been fulfilled. The Master's method is one of progression and development.

## CHAPTER V.

### CREATIVE ACTS.

THE principle of evolution has been demonstrated in most of the progress discernible in the world's history and in the process of change taking place within nature's wide realm. Among men, also, in their political organizations, their intellectual pursuits, and all the affairs which characterize their civilization and culture, a consecutive, developing growth may in most respects be predicated. Even the spiritual experiences of individuals and of the race fall in large part into the same category. Jesus Christ joined with the prophecy, the religious training and the divine preparation which had been granted to the past. He unfolded his own teaching progressively.

Within certain limits, the principle of development which science has formulated may be pronounced valid by every thoughtful person. But limits must be recognized. To discern them and to recognize the nature of the energy which produces the growth and de-

velopment is to distinguish between theistic evolution and those other forms of evolution better designated as materialistic, or pantheistic. Theistic evolution simply indicates a certain mode in which God works. This work proceeds through an ascending scale of existences with such quietness and slight gradations that the nature of the power and the reality of a person at work are often overlooked, but at occasional limits, or bounds, special forms appear, seemingly demanding a special power. It is at these bounds that God is best seen.

The first particle of matter, that original nucleus of the nebulous mass which subsequently whirled in space and formed a universe, — whence came that primal substance? Matter is eternal, some have said. But this answer does not satisfy. Matter has not the attributes of mind. No microscopic examination, no close analysis has yet shown that the gray particles of a human brain, the most finely organized and wondrously endowed of any material substances, move from material causes alone. There must be something more than they, something immaterial, directing them. No theory of the universe — that vast organization of material parts — has yet accounted for the beginning of things in other reasonable terms than to predicate mind back of matter. The first half-clause of

the Bible epitomizes the best wisdom of science, philosophy, and revelation: "In the beginning God created." At that farthest bound the utter necessity of a God is felt.

With this predication of beginning, we may let geology, astronomy, biology, and all the allied sciences then give their utterances. The nebular hypothesis seems credible; we may accept it, if those who are specially versed in the modes and methods of nature tell us it is the only hypothesis yet known to man that in any measure adequately accounts for observed facts. A cosmic dust, a chaotic mist may have been the first product of God's creation, which he saw was "without form and void." It was, nevertheless, his creation; it was endowed with properties which he had given, and it must obey his laws. Then the forces which he himself imparted, agitate, impel, affect this first creation. Modification at once begins; differentiation follows; order comes gradually out of chaos; and in the slow process of development inorganic matter assumes its manifold shapes.

But another limit in the unfolding series is met when the first form of life appears. In earth and rocks and metals, in chemical elements, liquids, acids, solids, there is no life. The closest study in all the laboratories of the world has shown that life alone begets life. No

such possibility as spontaneous generation has ever been discovered. Development from the cosmic dust to the full-orbed star and planet, the great sun and moon, and the round world may be possible; but there appears an impassable gulf between mere matter and matter endowed with life, however near towards the pioneer front of inorganic matter be pushed the lowest type of organic existence. A new act of creation at this point seems imperative. When life exists, there must have been life before it. In pure matter there is no life. That gulf must have been bridged by God. He, the source of life, gave life, and with this gift a new order of development begins.

What marvelous forms, what plenitude of beauty, what variety of uses and pleasures are exhibited in the vegetable kingdom, from the tiny, almost imperceptible mosses, lichens and molds, to the gigantic sequoias of California! The flowers, the grains, the fruits, how innumerable! Yet we can readily conceive that all these, though well-nigh infinite in variety, may have developed from primary, simple forms when once the initiative was given and the laws of modification prescribed.

It may be that this initiative and these laws were of sufficient potency and scope to extend beyond the vegetable limits into the animal

kingdom, for there are forms of life manifesting characteristics of both the animal and the vegetable kingdom, and seeming to belong to each. Perhaps the transition from the one to the other has been by developing powers inherent within the first plant-life, and no new creative act has been necessary to enter the realm of animate beings.

But, whatever the truth may be at this point, on ascending the scale of animal existence a limit of natural expansion, extension and growth is met when man is found. Physically he may have descended from the anthropoid ape, but he possesses a new, a moral nature, which the beast does not possess, and the germs of which it is hard to prove the brute in any degree manifests, despite Herbert Spencer's contention that the human conscience is seen in its incipiency in a dog's fear of punishment when, after wrong doing, he skulks to his corner. The highest form of ape stands on the other side of a gulf from man. Physical and mental qualities may be similar, may be closely related, but there is in man, even in the lowest type of man (inherent, albeit for a time dormant) a capacity to discern between good and evil, to entertain and appreciate conceptions of abstract truth, to exercise and evince qualities which we term ethical, such

as the ape, anthropoid though he be, has never given slightest token of possessing.

Yet another limit in the order of development, no less significant than the preceding, has been indicated by Jesus Christ at the point where morality would pass into Christian character. On his authority a new creative act is here necessary. A man by the exercise of his moral faculties, by effort improving every excellence and virtue within him, nevertheless cannot, without aid from above, make himself a Christian, cannot perfect his spiritual vision and render himself spiritually minded. He must have a new nature begun within him; he must "be born again." This demands divine intervention, a direct divine impartation, an impartation of life, which in the New Testament is described as the new birth. There follows then opportunity for development in Christian excellence, for growth in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, the transition from babes fed with the sincere milk of the word into adults partaking of the strong meat of the Gospel, from the condition of children, speaking and thinking as children, unto that of men who have put away childish things in religion, who seek the perfection of Christian graces by working out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

The four bounds which we have considered separate the course of development into four segments: the inorganic realm, or realm of mere matter; the organic realm, or realm of natural life; the human realm, or realm of moral perception; and the spiritual realm, or, to use the New Testament term, the kingdom of heaven. These realms are in an ascending scale of vastly increasing values. They may be named the mineral kingdom, the vegetable and animal kingdom, the moral kingdom, and the spiritual kingdom, or the kingdom of heaven. Their bounds are the points at which creative acts of the Almighty are apparent.

In the Gospels the terms "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" are used synonymously. Sometimes the bare phrase "the kingdom" is employed. This kingdom is the great cardinal fact proclaimed. John the Baptist, though not understanding it, came to introduce it: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus brought as the first message on his lips, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the Gospel." His teachings were concerning that kingdom. Nearly all his parables had that for their basis; the kingdom of heaven was likened to seed and sowers, to leaven, to lost coin, and precious pearls; to erring sons,

and wandering sheep, to a vineyard, a marriage feast, a great supper, a householder going into a far country, and many other similitudes. The kingdom of God was the theme of conversation and discourse in the synagogue, on the mount, in Jerusalem, in the field; with Nicodemus, with the disciples, with the twelve, with the Pharisees.

Jesus did not teach that the kingdom of heaven was to be set up at some future time, on his return to earth; then it might be proclaimed and completed; but it began with him, and through his gentle teaching was made manifest as already founded. He did not say that men would enter it at, or after, death, but that while here on earth, in this present life, men could enter it and were entering it. The citizens of that kingdom became recipients of a new life now. What their blessings and privileges might be in the hereafter were not the only, nor indeed the great, considerations, but their new life, new joys, new duties, and new activities in the present were chief and emphatic. The kingdom of God was a present reality on the lips of Jesus, and not a prediction. It had already come; and yet he toiled and prayed that it might come still more fully. He also taught his disciples, the citizens of the kingdom, to pray and toil for its extension: "Thy kingdom come."

The Jew had expected the restoration of the throne of David, and the reëstablishment of the temporal kingdom. John the Baptist shared this expectation; and the apostles could not rid themselves of it until after the Ascension. Not that would Jesus build. The highest blessings which God could bestow were not necessarily connected with prosperity in the nation, pride in the household, and patriotic satisfaction and comfort in the individual. Jesus let earthly governments alone, — far wiser than have been his reputed vice-regents who sit on the bank of the Tiber. But there are men to-day, neither Jews nor Romanists, who expect, nevertheless, a kind of Jewish kingdom and ecclesiastical sovereignty as the greatest work that Christianity can accomplish. They would institute a kind of social revolution, restore primitive conditions, on the principle — to travesty it a little — that to give every man "ten acres and a cow," would convert and Christianize him. Had this been the remedy for the world we might expect that Christ would himself have instituted some such social reform; but while he healed bodies and relieved distresses, having and evincing unfailing compassion toward all who were in any way unfortunate, he made not external but internal conditions chief and emphatic.

John the Baptist did not view the kingdom of God as did Jesus, although appointed a special forerunner to usher it in. He could be used for a work which he did not fully comprehend. If guided by an architect wiser than he, he could build better than he knew. John the Baptist was a gloomy man, certainly stern and severe in his conception of the kingdom of heaven, and in his presentation of it. John withdrew to the desert, fasted oft, preached sternly, "Repent, — bring forth fruits meet for repentance." He declared that he who came after him came with judicial axe laid at the root of the tree and an eschatological fan within his hand to thoroughly purge the floor. He told the people to impart clothing and food to the destitute, the tax-gatherers to be honest in collections, the soldiers to refrain from violence and be content with their pay. His proclamation was one of judgment; his view of reformation was to alter conduct. There are John the Baptists to-day, denunciatory, threatening, warning, who, though eager to fulfill a divine commission, do not perceive the true essentials of that commission.

The kingdom of heaven does not come with sternness, does not begin with preaching judgment, does not undertake primarily to rectify conduct. Jesus lived among men, remaining in

the deserts apart from men only during his forty days fast, and the few weeks of retirement shortly before his crucifixion. But the haunts of men were his haunts. He brought the kingdom to them and thus sought to introduce them to the kingdom. He associated with the families, and sat at the feasts of men and moved among the crowds. With the axe he would not smite the bruised reed; with the fan he extinguished not the smoking flax: "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." All moral excellence he made rest in motive; all Christian grace to spring from the heart. He emphasized the inward condition; and so not deeds, not conduct, does he dwell upon, so much as faith and love and intention. With these, right conduct will regulate itself.

While John might bid a man guard his hand, Jesus would bid him guard his heart. According to the teaching of Jesus, anger is murder at one stage; lust, though as yet unfulfilled, is the equivalent of adultery committed. Christ prefers the amputation of hand or foot rather than the commission of sin in the heart. The external might perish; the internal must be preserved.

John the Baptist, while in prison, doubted whether Jesus was the Messiah, because Jesus did not come with stern judgments, speedy

issues, and the establishment of a throne. He looked for the axe and the fan which he had proclaimed. Jesus was waiting for inward assimilation of the truth, for slow growth, for development of life according to the divine impartation. John expected his own message to be literally and immediately fulfilled.

Many of us are, like John, impatient. Having uttered a truth, true in the morning, we forget that at noontime its pertinence, like the dawn of the morning, may have passed away. We judge also the coming and the spread of the kingdom too frequently by the standard of our own restricted horizon, becoming doubtful and even discouraged, if our hopes, the offspring of first convictions, are not straightway verified and established. The kingdom is God's kingdom. We cannot dictate to it, cannot hurry it outside of God's plan, cannot alter its essential character.

This kingdom cannot be augmented, as Jesuits have thought, by capturing savages, baptizing them by force and terming them Christians; or, as Vladimir tried with his Russians, having sixty thousand in a day baptized at military command, without regard to faith and inward assimilation of truth. The kingdom of God can spread among men only by that creative act involved in the new birth, that spiritual im-

pact of the divine truth which comes through faith and personal surrender, and by the growth consequent thereto.

This spiritual life is not a life perpetuated by inheritance from parents, is not a life in the line of developing excellences and moral characteristics — although a godly heritage and moral excellences may be like good soil, favorable to good seed, — but is a life issuing directly from the Creator, a new life. It is not a new manner of life, — that were mere conduct; the very words of the original tongue which Jesus employed show this; but it is life itself, that which exists and is manifest in mutually related functions, not the manner of manifestation nor the mode of operation.

Regeneration does not mean simply a change from immorality to morality. That would be no more than John the Baptist required, a conformity to outward requirements. It includes this change, but it means far more; it involves new discernment, new capacities, new duties, new affections, new aspirations, new blessings, — indeed an extension, not perfect at first, yet begun, into all the spiritual activities of which the soul of man, made in the image of God, is capable. The Apostle Paul was as moral a man before his conversion as after it. He honestly thought that he was serving God in persecuting

the church and hindering the kingdom all he could. After his conversion he could be no more honest, no more well-meaning; but he had a new nature which enabled him to discern differently, love differently, and experience satisfaction in a new sphere of activity. He was a new man spiritually, while unchanged morally. He had a new life, and that new life was more than an accession of morality, more than a mere alteration in his mode of living. Some men have marked moral changes at the time of the new birth, but the degree of change is due to previous condition. According to the teaching of Jesus the essential character of the spiritual life is that it issues from the Spirit.

This internal change, however, does not take place without coöperation on the part of man. While the operations of the Spirit are still, subtle, and mysterious, even like the wind, the presence of which we feel, and the effects of which we see, without beholding the wind itself, yet the Spirit's operations are not unexpected, erratic, nor arbritary in coming and going. Man can invite and secure the work of the Spirit. Indeed, man must prepare for the Spirit, must receive the Spirit, and must allow the Spirit to have free control of his heart. Man, then, in conversion, is born of two coöperating agencies, of his own volitions and of the

Spirit's power. As in all births, here, also, there are two parents. Man's willing mind, coöperating with the divine mind, begets conversion. Two accordant volitions produce a new spirit.

In his relation to the individual, it was Christ's great work to induce inward compliance with his own will. He sought to awaken faith in his person. He exhorted men to believe. He did many mighty works that they might believe, and in response to belief; but withheld the works when belief was withheld. He revealed his love in order to call forth love; he showed compassion, rendered service, gave his life, as the greatest proof of love, desiring love from man in return. He imparted instruction, left commandments requiring obedience, the inward obedience of the heart. He gave promises of his presence and help to inspire confidence and trust. He disclosed difficulties and cross-bearing, yet blessedness and reward and final triumph, in order to call forth in his disciples determination, zeal, and consecration. He sought ever to win men, to stir them, so that men should then bestir themselves. He sought to win their hearts, their own action, their coöperation and allegiance. In his ministry to mankind, there is not the slightest effort manifest to coerce men, or to allure them unawares into the kingdom of heaven, or in any way to overlook

or diminish the dignity of their own free choice and free act in coming to him. Rather, he emphasized that independency of action, and showed his respect for man's noble freedom by patiently following the sometimes toilsome and disappointing path of persuasion, and by suffering rebuffs, rejection, and final crucifixion at the hands of men, who, in their own determined purposes, would not yield to his gentle influences and loving appeals. The Spirit seeks, but does not seize, men.

John the Baptist came, though with harsh demeanor and uncompromising message, yet addressing himself to men's judgments, as he called them to repentance, — "Repent ye." The baptism which John administered to all who came to him, even to Jesus himself, became the most characteristic act associated with John. It gave him his name, the baptizer. When, therefore, Jesus, himself but recently baptized, speaks to a person familiar with John's work, of a birth "of water and of Spirit" as an indispensable preparation for entering the kingdom of God, the most obvious and most necessary understanding of the word "water" is of something connected with that application of water, which John for nine months had made, and still was making. But the baptism of John did not stand alone, as a rite effica-

cious in itself. All knew that John bade not simply to be baptized, but to *repent* and be baptized; and the greater emphasis rested upon repentance. Therefore, the word reminding men of John's baptism will remind them of John's essential and characteristic message, compliance with which alone allowed one to be baptized, "Repent." Nicodemus, to whom these words were addressed, doubtless so understood them. Such seems the most obvious and most natural meaning. A paraphrase might render the utterance as follows: "Except a man be born of a repenting, submissive mind, and of the power of the Spirit coöperating therewith, he cannot receive the new life which makes him a member of the kingdom of God."

From experience we know full well that baptism alone, the mere rite, does not produce conversion nor occasion spiritual life. Ximenes's Moors and Vladimir's Russians were Moors and Russians after baptism as before. Baptism, as a sacrament, is attended with various blessings and peculiar joys to the person qualified to receive it, but baptism follows conversion, as an act of obedience and a profession to the world of changes already wrought. It indicates death to the old, and resurrection to the new life.

The kingdom of God has evinced its catholicity by receiving all who have ever with simple, repentant and believing hearts given place to the Spirit's operation. It has taken within its borders the vilest sinners, not with their sins, but despite their sins, already repented of; it has given them new life, and allowed within them the development of holiness and spiritual beauty. It has received to itself the saints of the earth. That kingdom has a marvelous population to-day. It is both visible and invisible. In the invisible part are gathered the nobility of all time both from royal palaces and from lowly hovels, from all lands, all climes; the disciples of our Lord of every age are there.

But the kingdom here with us on the earth is not wholly visible to the ordinary vision. No one denomination limits it. Doubtless not all the denominations together fully include it. The church is its most potent, tangible representative here on earth; but the church is not yet infallible; the church is still very human. Within her borders may be some who have not yet come into the kingdom through the acquisition of a new life, and outside of her borders are doubtless many more who, while truly citizens of the kingdom, have not as yet allied themselves with their fellow-citizens in organi-

zations for the better development of the new life bestowed, and the spread of the knowledge of it throughout the world.

We pray for this kingdom to come. There are wide areas of the earth, thickly populated, where the kingdom as yet has scarcely been named. There are multitudes of hearts surrounded in the most favored lands with the most favorable influences that as yet have scarcely given the kingdom serious attention. Multitudes still there are who fail to understand what the kingdom may mean to them; other multitudes who are bitterly opposed to its spread or even to its existence. We pray for the kingdom, we must likewise work for it. Our task is to prepare the Spirit room. In our own lives we must be growing in grace constantly. We must develop the life we have. As for others, sympathizing with their condition and their needs, we must seek to render their hearts receptive of the Spirit's influence; we must deal gently, lovingly with all men, seeking to win them by the power of the life to the Source of life. As we pray there is work for us of preparing for divine creative acts by setting the conditions in order.

The kingdom has already come in wonderful measure. In proportion to the changes involved, it is but a short time since Jesus was

on earth in Palestine with a dozen followers. A little room, hardly large enough for a modern desk-office, would have contained all the members of the kingdom then. Jesus had the wonderful hardihood to leave that company, a little handful, to leaven the whole world. But see the results! How that leaven has spread! Not to mention the innumerable hosts in the kingdom invisible, look here on earth now: every continent possessed in part, and in large part, by the kingdom; almost every nation having citizens of that kingdom by the thousand and the million. And beyond the mere multiplication of numbers, see how the kingdom has spread through its quiet influences; scarcely a man breathes to-day, however bitterly he may oppose the kingdom, however little he may think himself concerned in it, who is not in some way indebted to the kingdom of God, a recipient of its benefits. Our governments, our institutions, our trade, commerce, travel, literature, art, architecture, industries, all receive some benefit from the kingdom. The kingdom has come, how largely! Not alone is every church a memorial of its presence, but every hospital, every asylum, every school, every printing press. Men may cry, "Lo, here" and "Lo, there," but the kingdom comes apace. With hopeful hearts its members need but to be true to the life, giving

the Spirit free scope, that the mighty work of God may progress, and his kingdom may still further and more speedily come. They must, however, have a clear conception of what the life really is, and must let it become manifest in the simple, practical relations of human society.

## CHAPTER VI.

### RULES FOR THE LIFE WITHOUT RULES.

THE spiritual life has been strangely conceived of. In the second century after Christ the Christian doctors began to maintain that Christ had prescribed a twofold rule of holiness and virtue; the one ordinary, the other extraordinary; the one lower, the other higher; the one for men of business, the other for persons of leisure, and such as desire greater glory in the future world. They, therefore, divided the requirements of Christ for life and morals into "precepts" and "counsels." By precepts they meant the laws which were universally obligatory and had been enacted for men of all descriptions on the lower plane; by the counsels they indicated the rules which pertained, as they thought, solely to such as were called, or aspired, to superior holiness and a closer walk with God.

From these distinctions sprang in the course of time the whole system of monasteries and convents, with their "vows" and "rules," under

which an isolated, unworldly life thought to be spiritual, became formal and lifeless, its chief merit being that it fortunately was a life possible for the few only. According to this standard, the more spiritual one became the less suited was he to live among his fellows. He was taken from his regular labor, from his usual haunts, from his home and loved ones. Marriage was deemed a sin, the getting of gain unlawful, and the possession of property forbidden. The more of spiritual life a man obtained the less of social life must he have; and at length it became obvious that the less of mental and physical life also could he enjoy; for he was obliged to forego pleasure, to restrain the imagination, to curb poetic fancies, if he had them, and to deny his independency of judgment; and through fastings and vigils, by flagellations and pains, he reduced to its utmost tenuity what little life of the body his cell had left him. The flesh was supposed to be the seat of sin and it must be crucified. Whatever was natural was looked upon as unspiritual.

What a travesty of Christ's example was this!

But a recent view, much proclaimed in some sections to-day, is hardly less erroneous. It makes spirituality to consist of emotional excitement. The soberness and gloom of the monastery it puts far away, and likewise the

isolation, for its greatest argument is to be found in the contagious ecstasies of the prayer-meeting, the songs and shouts and hallelujahs of religious enthusiasm. This conception relegates to the second grade all those who possess a calm, perchance a slightly melancholy disposition, to whom life seems serious, who move sedately and think soberly and are as little inclined to hallelujahs as to Hebrew. This view of the spiritual life fails to recognize that there are times in an individual's experience when, instead of experiencing rapture on the mountain top, he must walk through the valley, shut in, cramped, depressed; it seems to declare that all experience under a cloud and in trial must be regarded as inferior in religious value to those which are happier, as though tears could never be in place, and as though, when God led one through the valley of the shadow of death, there were no rod and no staff upon which to lean for comfort and help.

But yet another definition of spirituality has thrust itself upon popular attention. It is this: that, while the term morality indicates a recognition of ethical values in relation to this present life, spirituality indicates a recognition of ethical values in relations to the future life. Accordingly, the spiritual man is a man of expectancy, hope, anticipation; he lives not for this

life, but for the life to come; heaven is his home, this is but a brief abiding-place; he longs for to-morrow, has little or no satisfaction in to-day. This view makes the spiritual life a life deferred.

Neither of these views accords with the teaching and example of Jesus. He went amongst men; he was not an ascetic. He brought gladness and cheer; he participated in the joys of men. Yet he himself wept; he was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs." He plainly declared that the life he gave began in this life: "He that believeth hath everlasting life."

What, then, is the spiritual life? Can any rules be laid down for it?

One very plain definition of the life which Jesus desired is involved in his words, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." To know the will of Christ and to do it, that is to show love to him, that is to be in fellowship with him and to partake of his life. The calm, the serious, the sober may be as spiritual as the active, the vivacious, the joyous. The heavy-laden, the sore oppressed, the sadly afflicted may be as truly pleasing to God and in as intimate communion with him as the easy-going, light-hearted, singing Christian. Indeed, in the darkest hour of

midnight the disciple is as near the divine support as in the brightest glare of noonday. This the Master teaches.

True discipleship is spirituality. Knowledge and obedience are its plainest tests. To have Christ's commandments and to keep them, that is proof of devotion; to know his will and to do it, that is to become like-minded with him. It cannot be proved that Jesus ever laughed or shouted or sang. But it is known that he shed tears and was in anguish and distress; he sweat bloody drops; he prayed in lonely midnight hours; he was heartbroken. And yet there is no evidence whatever that he ever condemned or reproved the play or display of emotion. The prattle and the mirth of children he would not rebuke. Their mock weddings and dances, their made-up funerals and sorrows he took notice of and used as illustrations in his discourses. He participated in the quiet joys of the home life of his friends, and entered into the generous festivities of the marriage feast. All this time he was true to the life within him; he was setting the example for men of all succeeding centuries. What better precedent can we find, though we search all records through?

In all this variety of experience in the environment of the ordinary life of his day, the

principle of Jesus lay in his words, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work," and, "I must work while it is day." His life was one of devotion to the will of the Father. To know and to do God's will was the one object of his solicitude.

Intellect and will enter into spirituality more than do emotions. Duty brings one nearer to God than does feeling. Whether one feels like a task or not, the only question for a conscientious soul is, What is the divine wish? When that wish is known and heeded, then joy or sorrow may come, the disciple has nothing to fear, for he and his acts are in the keeping of the Almighty. That is the consolation for the Christian.

It is not, however, a small thing to have the commandments of Christ. Even to have the choicest of them treasured up in memory is not to possess them as the Lord means. But to have his commandments in the Biblical sense is to understand them; to know the will of God is to enter into an appreciation of the spirit of Christ; and this is not so easy as it may seem at first. It requires study and involves growth. One cannot solve the mysteries of God's great revelation all at once; one must be humble, and patient, and plodding. The highest spiritual state is attained when one has lived long in the

divine service, ever adding a little to knowledge, ever learning more; and this, doubtless, requires long years for its consummation. Yet one can always know enough of the divine purpose to fulfill the demands of a day, and may possess a sufficiency of the mind of Christ to come into close accord with the loving heart of God. However far into the future the vistas of possibility may extend, enough is intelligible at any one time for the knowledge, the duty, the service, and the experience of the hour.

To know fully the will of God requires a knowledge of all his revelation; and how variously has that revelation been given to man! It is in the Bible, and in all his works, — in all his laws, in all his creatures. Nature and man and history reveal the mind of God. In them are operative his laws, expressive of his will. To learn any law of the universe is to learn just so much of the divine mind. Physiology and psychology, geology and astronomy, botany and zoölogy, anthropology and sociology disclose the mind of God, wherever they set forth proven law. Science, enlarging the mental horizon, may prepare the soul for spiritual vision. The school and college may fit the pupil for heaven. *May*, that is all that can be said; it is possible, no more can be affirmed. The well-trained, the well-stored mind, as it has an increased circle of

knowledge for contact with the infinite, may thereby participate in a closer fellowship with the divine.

But simply to know the will of God is not to commune with him; having the commandments of Christ does not of itself assure likeness to him. One must do that will and keep those commandments. Obedience is the second great requisite, but not second in importance. A submissive will is as necessary as an apprehending mind. Indeed, God has revealed himself as willing to suffer an ignorant mind, to condone lack of knowledge, to hold no one responsible for what he does not know; but God has given no intimation that he ever overlooks a rebellious will, or treats leniently a stubborn disposition, or thinks lightly of disobedience. When the mind has once apprehended a law of God, then the will must conform to it; when divine purposes and plans are intellectually discerned, then in that direction must volition flow and action follow; "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;" "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Keeping the commandments is the supreme test. Obedience really overleaps all other marks of discipleship. Submission of will is the greatest evidence of spirituality, as indeed it is the chiefest condition for its perfection.

Here is the point of difficulty in most men's lives. Here they rebel; they will not obey. Of knowledge they have a sufficiency; but they will not yield to what they know. The stubborn will keeps them back. It shuts some men out of the kingdom of God altogether; others, who have yielded sufficiently to have come within the kingdom, draw arbitrary lines in dealing with God; in some things they will obey, in other things they will not; a part of the time they will serve God faithfully, a part of the time they will not; some sacrifices for God they readily make, others they will not; and so they mark off their lives into segments of willingness and unwillingness, of obedience and disobedience, of tenderness and devotion, of stubbornness and contumacy. Such men cannot grow in grace.

Oh, this stubborn will! this selfish will! this it is that accounts for an unspiritual church, for half-hearted Christians, for a drag at the wheels of Gospel progress. This stubborn will! Can it not grow tender? Can it not yield completely? Will it not obey in all things and at all times and to all lengths? That would be a surrender indeed; that would be genuine consecration; that would lead to true sanctification.

But spirituality is not mere goodness. A great truth, which is an old truth revised, has

recently dawned upon the Christian world to prevent the shrivelling of the spiritual life into simple morality. It is the doctrine to which theologians give the name, the immanence of God; it is essentially the old doctrine of the omnipresence of God. Under the old view, however, by some fatal inconsistency, the Christian who believed that God was everywhere present, straightway thought of him as somehow afar off in the heavens, or elsewhere out of reach, and to be brought near only by the circumlocution of unreal, formal appeals or unusual, extraordinary propitiations. According to the new view God is recognized as ever present, in all nature, everywhere. The winds blow, the stars and planets move in their orbits because of him. All natural objects express his will; the tree, the flower, and the fruit assume their multitudinous forms because of his wisdom and his very presence. It is a recognition of the truth of Paul's utterance made long ago at Athens: "God is not far from any one of us; in him we live and move and have our being." He is our very life. It is not necessary to stretch forth the hand to find him, still less to cry aloud and batter at heaven's door as though he were on a journey, or were sleeping. God makes his temple in man, dwelling in all the members and parts both of the individual and the social

organism. He notes the tiniest sparrow that falls to the ground; in his knowlege the very hairs of our heads are enumerated; he is concerned in everything we do; no affair of ours, however trivial to us, is beneath his notice; he is interested in everything that in any measure interests or affects mankind or his own broad creation.

This old truth, newly conceived of, newly realized and emphasized, is of vast importance. According to it we see that God does not reach down, as the naturalists and deists have claimed, out of some high and distant heaven, to touch nature occasionally, creating something or rectifying something; but he is always in nature, always preserving, controlling, regulating; without him nature could not exist. We see that God does not specially draw near his people, when they have pacified him and strenuously invoked him, but he is always near them, always trying to reveal himself, always seeking to make his children think of him and realize his presence and help.

Those who have caught this new, larger view of God's presence, are making less distinction between things sacred and things secular, for everything they regard as holy in its place and in its way. Monday is a holy day for Monday; and Saturday for Saturday is just as holy as

Sunday for Sunday. One God made all the days of the week and has fitted them each for its purpose. Business is a holy occupation at its time and in its place, if carried on uprightly; and so school, and home, and pleasure, and work are all hallowed, all made holy by the presence of God. We can be spiritual in all these places, at all these tasks, — indeed in anything and everything that ought to be, because God wills it.

God's manner of communicating with men becomes better understood when one realizes the divine immanence. He spoke to prophets and apostles of old; but he is no less near to the disciples of to-day, and has no less love for man and proffers no less of truth. Of the elements in inspiration, the divine approach and the divine message are constant; human need, the preparation of the human medium, and the occasion vary. But individual need is as great to-day as ever; and the preparation of individual minds and hearts, after centuries of Christian development, is superior to that in the times of the apostles and the prophets. Is inspiration, therefore, a charisma of bygone days? Is the book closed? the communication cut off?

To preachers all denominations recognize a divine communication, at least once. The

preacher must be "called" to preach; and examining councils catechise him strictly as to the character and validity of the "call." This is but an inquiry into the degree of inspiration which he has already received, fitting him for the discharge of his mission. By providential signs and by internal convictions he can test that inspiration. But is inspiration thereafter to be denied him? Does God depart from him thenceforth forever? Has the minister of the Gospel need of communications from the Spirit only when he is deciding upon his profession, and when he stands before the examining board in the hour of his ordination? How about the selection of a text, and the preparation of a sermon, and the presentation of a message? How about daily ministrations to needy souls, and constant living in the divine presence? One answer only can be given to these inquiries: if God be with his servant at all, then divine communications and a divine inspiration are possible for each day and each hour.

But every disciple has a "call," as well as the minister. If the Christian blacksmith has not a "call" to blacksmithing, he should leave his anvil, and go whither God does call him, as a Christian. The Christian merchant, the Christian lawyer, the Christian physician, if truly Christian, must be obedient to the divine

will, and must yield to that will in choosing and in pursuing a vocation. Infinite wisdom can individualize. The divine voice may come in multitudinous forms and accents, and with manifold injunctions. God may inspire the housekeeper in her work, the mother with her cares, the bricklayer, the civil engineer, the teacher, the clerk in whatever line of business, — every toiler, however humble or however great his daily toil.

If God be near, must he be dumb? Cannot he speak to his own children? Indeed, the really pertinent question is, Do the children hear?

With a knowledge of divine laws, with submission to the divine will, and a recognition of the divine presence, growth in the higher life will surely ensue. Nothing remains absolutely stationary. Spirituality means an unfolding life. The very idea of God involves a conception of change, improvement, enlargement, life, growth. The infinite energy is not power at a standstill, but power in operation. God is ever bringing something better to pass.

A conservatism which does not change signifies death. The church, or the individual, that is satisfied with present attainments and present visions may well nigh be termed dead, certainly is not a spiritual church or a spiritual individ-

ual. The conservatism of holding fast that which is good must be retained. Certainly we are to be careful and cautious, by always trying the spirits, lest we be led astray into vagary and error; yet never are we to remain motionless and become petrified, never be but the reminiscence of a past virtue, and the memory of a former life. We are to live, to live in the present, to live in the future, always to grow.

Good habits, if they lead to nothing better than themselves, are nearly, if not quite, as bad as bad habits. As soon as a virtue has become so habitual as to be a part of us without effort and without thought, then its special merit as a virtue ceases; it is now routine, and for spiritual value its worth consists in its serving only as the base of operations for reaching out toward the acquisition of a new virtue and the formation of a new habit. If we but remain in the exercise of old habits, however good they may be, we continue in the operation of virtues which have become automatic and mechanical; they occur on purely physical grounds, because our nerve fibers and brain cells have taken certain definite forms, and act from self-excitation, without conscious thought or volitional effort.

He who does a thing without thinking is not engaged in a spiritual act; he who acts without a conscious volitional effort is not liv-

ing a spiritual life. Such an one may live a moral life; he may be virtuous, true, honorable, and useful in society, a man upon whom neighbors and friends may rely; but he is not truly spiritual. Spirituality requires growth. All that is stored away in the sub-conscious depths of our being should furnish foundation and basis for our future character-building, but should not prove the conclusion of our acquisitions; for conscious functions alone are spiritual. They who are moral have greater possibilities of spiritual attainment than they who must first contend with positive wickedness of heart and with vicious habits. But it certainly is true that a man in the gutter, who, with all the strength of his being, is struggling to overcome a depraved appetite, may be really a more spiritual man than he who, perhaps in the innermost councils of the church, wraps himself in a kind of Pharisaic garb of self-righteousness and congratulates himself that he is not as the other man is; for the latter moves along in the even, blameless tenor of his way, making no gains, enlarging no spiritual boundaries, simply living a good life as a matter of habit.

Goodness should never be disparaged. It merits the apprenticeship of a lifetime. The world rightly aims at and strives for goodness. But when the Christian has attained even the

largest virtue, then he should reach up and obtain yet other unappropriated goodness. Jesus Christ has set the standard; the saint purest grown may grow yet more: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." To be spiritual one must be growing.

The spiritual life becomes at length, also, if not at first, a life of love. Love springs up spontaneously sometimes, the inevitable consequence of hidden, almost mysterious affinities. Sometimes it results from a calm, intellectual appreciation of the excellences of the object beloved. At other times it grows, by slow process, out of an arrested attention, to an enkindled interest, then a dawning sympathy, at length real solicitude, and so, by stages, becomes itself, love. To this latter process, service is the main avenue of approach. Continued service to a person leads almost invariably to love for the person. Many of us have felt obliged at times, from a sheer sense of duty, to render a service to persons, unlovely, if not indeed positively distasteful to us at first; and yet, how often, as the service has proceeded, has dislike yielded to interest, and then to sympathy, and at length to love! There are mothers and fathers who have entertained no glad anticipations of the coming of a little stranger to the family, who, nevertheless, after its arrival, have found

the pain, the suffering, the service and sacrifice for the baby's multitudinous little wants the very means of calling forth love, deep and strong and patient.

The spiritual life is a life of love. Love begins with acquaintance and knowledge; it deepens through fellowship and communion; it expands, as, by slow transition, it takes on one by one the characteristics of the object beloved, and grows into the same likeness. The possessor of this life, amid all vicissitudes and trials, experiences nevertheless a contentment and peace surpassing any explanation springing out of his circumstances. This we must next consider.

## CHAPTER VII.

### TRANSCENDENT REPOSE.

The significance of the sayings of Jesus often lies as much in the circumstances under which they were spoken as in the words themselves. A case in instance is involved in his remarkable assurance of peace: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." These words are spoken on that memorable Thursday evening directly preceding the awful day of the crucifixion. Within two or three hours Jesus is set upon in the Garden of Gethsemane by a mob, seized, and hurried into the presence of his judges. Before another day has fully dawned he has been brought before the ex-high priest Annas, and the high priest Caiaphas, and the Sanhedrim of the Jews; next unto Pilate; thence transferred to Herod, and finally — his sixth judicial hearing — remanded to Pilate for sentence. By Pilate, at the clamor of the multitude, he is condemned to the cross.

Before the sun has again reached the zenith, the cruel nails have pierced the quivering flesh, and the upright post with its precious load has been reared aloft. Before another sun has set, he, the light of the world, has been taken from the cross and placed in the rocky tomb. The agony, the denial, the abandonment by friends, the mockings and scourgings of enemies, the pain, the rack, the supreme crisis, — all these dire experiences are impending, as he well knows, and yet the Master calmly speaks of peace: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Within twenty-four hours the disciples whom he addresses will be scattered abroad, each one fleeing for his life lest he too suffer death like the Master.

The shadow of the cross gives these words their deepest meaning. They are words of peace, when there seems to be no peace. They soothe and allay and assure, when apparently every ground of solace and assurance and quietude is wanting. The utterance and the occasion seem at variance. Sentiment and circumstance seem antagonistic. Thought and environment have fallen into a paradox.

From these words, thus uttered, the lesson becomes apparent, that outward condition does not afford inward contentment and satisfaction. Peace is an experience of the soul. It does not

depend upon an east wind, or upon the weather, though climatic conditions affecting the bodily health have a potent influence upon spirits. But peace is independent of meteorological changes. Repose is transcendental. It exists independently of farming or business, of home and possessions. It depends upon what a man is, and what his relation to the divine help is.

Seekers after gold grasp and clutch at every glittering grain of golden treasure, but still are anxious and unsatisfied. The rich have never found peace and contentment in riches alone. More often they find carking cares and multiplied perplexities. Neither has the voluptuary, in all his round of diversions, acquired the joy of satisfying peace. Pleasure may promise solace, but it is a banker insolvent, never redeeming its pledges. No better reward of peace does position, or place, or power afford. Has any one yet observed that beauty, or fine garments, or facile manners, or aristocratic connections yield peace?

If outward circumstances gave peace, how, then, could David have stood undaunted before Goliath and unabashed before Saul? How could Elijah have stood before Ahab? How could Paul have spoken in the presence of Felix, and Festus, and Agrippa, and appealed unto Cæsar? Could Stephen, looking steadfastly up

into heaven, have rejoiced at the vision that met his gaze, while yet they stoned him? Would it, indeed, have been possible for the martyrs of all the Christian centuries to have endured their pains and tortures, if peace came from outward circumstances? Would those hymns have been sung in the Philippian prison by Paul and Silas? Would Martin Luther have defied the pope? Would he have translated the New Testament quietly on the Wartburg, while his enemies were harrying through the land like a pack of hounds after the quarry? Could he have thundered before the Council of Worms, "Here stand I: I can naught else. God help me"? If outward circumstances determined peace, how would it be with the great majority of us mortals, who possess little wealth, who lack position and power, who are uncommended by personal appearance, or brilliant endowments, or influential associations?

But in the shadow of the cross peace abounds. The words are addressed to the disciples, humble fishermen, unadorned, untitled, unrenowned and soon to be deprived of their one powerful friend. It is surely in no external way that Jesus bestows upon his followers peace and quietness. The world tries to make its apportionment of satisfaction to a few favorites, and under certain favorable conditions, but the gifts

of Jesus are for all men and at all times. Peace may abound in the midst of the sorest trial, under the deepest affliction, beneath the darkest cloud.

The converse of this first lesson is happily true; the peace which Jesus gives, as it is not dependent upon outward circumstance, so is it equal to any emergency, for it is not destroyed by any external commotion.

Here is a picture: on the Mediterranean Sea sails a ship, storm-tossed, having two hundred and seventy-six souls on board, — the captain, officers, and crew, military officials and soldiers, merchants and pleasure-seekers; there are also some prisoners, chained in custody of the soldiers. For fourteen days the frail vessel has labored in the sea. Freight and tackling have been thrown overboard to lighten the ship. Consternation is depicted on every face but one; despair in every heart but one. One man, a prisoner, in his chains, is crying, "Be of good cheer; eat; abide by the ship; we shall all be saved; not one shall perish." That one man has leaned upon his God; in consequence, that one man enjoys now peace and confidence. That man is the Apostle Paul on his way to Rome, in bonds, but his spirit breathes the free air. Outward circumstances have not affected his sense of security, his soul's quiet calm.

Our Master furnished a yet better illustration of peace. But a very brief time after his message of peace was bequeathed unto his disciples, when the multitude came upon him in the Garden of Gethsemane, he was the calmest, most peaceful person present, though the most imperiled. When he stepped forth from the shadow and darkness into the glare of their torches and calmly said, "Whom seek ye? I am he," — affrighted, the soldiers and officers and proud ecclesiastics who had come to arrest him fell on their faces to the ground. His Apostle Peter, in attempting to defend him by the sword, with clumsy agitated stroke aimed at the neck, smote a man's ear. It was a frightened concourse on either side. He alone remained calm. The disciples, though three years already under his tuition, had not yet learned the lessons of a spiritual kingdom and of spiritual conquests. They knew almost as little of him whom they revered as did those who hated Jesus. In alarm for their own lives they soon fled. The Master taken, they could think only of death, and an end to all their ardent expectations for Israel, an end to all their earnest endeavors and hearty sacrifices for the Master's sake. The lessons of spiritual truth, though ever so well taught, had not been well learned by the disciples. But no fear ruffled the Master's peace-

ful repose. He had fought out the battle in his own soul: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." He evinced a peacefulness not affected by circumstance.

But the triumphs of peace are visible in the lives of Christian disciples to-day. Every pastor in the round of his ministrations of comfort and consolation enters homes from which he carries more than he can by any means convey thither: homes that ever stand out distinctly in his thought; homes in which murmurings have been stayed, in which rebellion has been quelled, in which undisturbed peace reigns. The benediction of such homes spreads throughout an entire community. In spite of circumstances, yea, by the very adversity of the lot, the triumphs of peace become the more complete.

There are saints in every community, with their greater opportunities, more saintly to-day than the Christians of Corinth who were called saints by the Apostle Paul. Every church could furnish a quota. Not that men and women of this age or of any age have attained unto final perfection, but they have so grown in grace as to make the contrast between what now is and what might have been almost stupendous. By the victories achieved, by the steadiness and

patience with which they endure trial, by their bearing of burdens, by the fortitude and confidence wrought into life, by the fine fiber fashioned into the texture of sterling Christian character are we to judge.

There is a peace that can endure unruffled the loss of property, the asperities of enemies, the desertion of friends. There is a peace which, despite calumnies and misrepresentations, despite scorn and ridicule, can still retain its calm and keep its sweetness. There is a peace which can survive the blasting of fond hopes and the miscarriage of cherished plans. Such peace issues from a divine source. It partakes of the mighty pronouns of the utterance, "Peace *I* leave with you, *my* peace *I* give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give *I* unto you." That is more than a human peace.

Not long ago the Church thought of herself as having but one message. She exhorted men, "Be ye reconciled to God." She pleaded with them, "Repent of your sins; obey the Lord; be at peace with him." Eager to afford the ministrations that might in any measure aid in reconciling or shriving the soul, her servants stood with anxious solicitude beside the bed of the dying, whispering, "Has he yet made his peace with God?" At length the Church has seen also that her mission presents

a broader aspect. Jesus declared the first great commandment to be to love God supremely, but he also said, "The second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" that is, thou shalt be reconciled to thy neighbor in all his ways and all his interests, and shalt promote the conditions of peace between thyself and thy neighbor; as thy devotion extends upward toward God, so must it also extend outward amongst men. This is the declaration that religion must be cubical, of solid content; it must not only have elevation, but also extension; it must be not aspiring only, but also toiling; while ideal, it must also be practical; not a religion of faith only, but a religion of works as well; not only fitting for heaven, but equally fitting for earth; a religion not alone to die by, but to live by, daily and hourly, from youth to old age. The hope of Christianity is not alone for the hereafter, but it also embraces the earth. Christianity is adapted to all life; it molds all life; it purifies all life; it redeems and sanctifies all life. With it nothing is common or unclean. What it has touched becomes straightway holy. The lowliest task can be glorified by the Christian: "Whatsoever ye do, whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God." That is the new, broader spirit of preaching and service that is now actuating the church.

But it needs to be made plain and to be emphasized that this new spirit is not a substitution for the old. It is an addition. It displaces nothing. It simply enlarges. It does not claim that philanthropy is religion, that good works are sufficient, that this life is all. It simply emphasizes the love of man, the necessity of good deeds, and the importance of holy living in this life. Without the old message of love toward God, the new message of love toward man is idle and meaningless, for it loses its motive and becomes but a sentiment. Peace amongst men, if alone, is superficial; it is vain unless there be also peace with God.

The church has been saying, What is the use of preaching the Gospel to a man who is hungry and cold and shelterless? we must feed him and clothe him and house him first. But the inquiry is no less pertinent, What is the use of dispensing food unless the tidings of salvation be also given? Of what value is a garment, if a man's inner nature be not touched and changed? Why house a man, if we do not also make him the temple of something holy? Indiscriminate charity will but multiply improvidence and pauperism. Sociology as a science may be mere theory, as an art it may be naught but sentimentalism. Philanthropy alone has no point of contact with the divine; it is simply

of man, for man, and ends with man. There must be the ideal; there must be the upward reach of the soul by faith; there must be devotion to God, a reconciliation with him, the attainment of his approval.

Peace with God, — has a man *that?* This question is as pertinent for the church to put to-day as ever. It is the supreme question for a human soul to answer. Peace with God, — this is what imparts to all life its true significance; this beautifies life and sanctifies life. This allays the pangs of conscience; this takes away the pain and penalty of past guilt; this begins heaven here in the breast. Attendance upon the services of a Christian church, the enjoyment of the preaching of the Gospel, the payment of honest debts and the faithful fulfilment of social obligations, meet many of the ethical requirements of our day, but fall far short of the high duty and privilege involved in the teaching of Jesus. There are husbands whose wives have satisfying peace in the fellowship and communion of the divine, but wives cannot answer this supreme question for their husbands; the men must answer for themselves. There are young people whose fathers and mothers have long lived in the peace of God, but the great question is for children to answer for themselves. It is an individual question,

because it is an individual matter. It concerns not social peace, nor a general amnesty; it is for the single soul. This is the sure foundation for all other quietness and calm. Without this one, the others are deceptive and ephemeral. This abides.

A simple rule, approved by revelation and by experience, can be given for the acquirement of peace: two things are necessary, obedience and trust.

The son of any household, while obedient, has nothing to fear. His one sufficient answer to all misgivings and all sophistries of judgment, whether of himself or of his friends, is, "Father told me to do this," and then he may quietly and steadily continue his task. That is all the logic a good son needs, after his father has once spoken. Alternatives and evasions concern him not, neither do speculations regarding the outcome or significance of his movements, if father has bidden it so. Even if in the performance of his duty some accident or mischance befalls him, still the conscientious son of a wise father, though filled with regret, has nothing to fear: "Father knows I meant well," is his perfectly justifiable excuse; "I did the best I could." Is God less reasonable than a wise earthly parent?

The specific act of obedience varies with the individual and with the hour. But that

thing is required which conscience bids, whatever it may be. Confession of Christ before men, baptism and church membership, reconciliation with some offended neighbor or friend, the undoing, as far as possible, of some previous wrong act by restitution and restoration, the remodeling of extensive business operations upon a strictly honest and honorable basis, — these may be the beginnings for different people; but whatever the beginning, the moral act is the same, obedience to God through fidelity to conscience. Whether it be to open the purse, to quicken the hand, to melt the eye in sympathy, or simply to stand fearlessly for the right, obedience is necessary.

There is no ambiguity in the rule, whatever may be the outlook. This is the rule of life that has always made life noble. The martyrs of old observed this rule. It was the rule of the apostles. Peter and John, when admonished by the great Jewish council, the Sanhedrim, to cease preaching, answered unhesitatingly, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." This is the spirit of all reformers. Wickliffe, Huss, and Luther set obedience to God above all else. Our pilgrim fathers came to these inhospitable shores and founded these New England colonies because they counted

no cost of property or pains too great to pay that they might have in their worship an opportunity to obey God according to the dictates of their own conscience. Though storm and shipwreck, though famine and destitution, though tomahawk and firebrand threatened them, yet they found a haven of rest and peace, because they made obedience to God supreme.

Obedience to the divine will makes heroes of common men. The path of duty leads far out beyond the vision of the farthest seeing man; it takes in the scope of infinite purposes. To obey God is to partake of his wisdom, for it is to engage in his plans. Then one can well trust. The humblest individual has a high and noble task, though it be but extending a cup of cold water to a thirsty comrade, when that is done in obedience to the will of God. The merest child is coöperating with plans such as fashioned this world and are now setting up the borders of the kingdom of heaven, when he does some act, trifling in itself, which it is the wish of God that that child perform. Nothing which God wills is insignificant. The pin-points and the dust-specks of human destiny are all grand and holy when seen in the light of infinite wisdom and love. The jots and tittles of the divine law are all great with

the certainties of the divine purpose and the possibilities of human peace.

Obedience to God enlists one in divine enterprises, unites one with divine wisdom, and brings one into the channels of the operation of divine strength and grace. Then there is nothing to fear. "Having done all, stand," wrote the Apostle Paul. Having obeyed the Lord, then may the disciple trust him, is the sentiment written all over the page of revelation, and running throughout the history of God's dealings with man. Having obeyed, there remains then nothing to dread, neither the wrath of man nor the displeasure of God.

On the chamber wall of his childhood's home, a mature man sees in memory, wherever he goes, a motto so placed by his mother's hand that the eye would easily see it when awakening, — a motto, not handsome in itself, not elegantly framed, but plain to read and very significant to him all his days: DO RIGHT AND FEAR NOT. It is the motto of the life of Christ. That sentiment wrought into active life brings peace. That ennobles the humblest career. That dignified the incomparable life of the Son of Man. When conscience and action blend in the same channel, then ensues peace such as the world cannot give and the world cannot take away.

"Who's there?" the wind the casement rattles.
"Who speaks?" the tree-tops murmur and sigh.
"Some one is looking!" Naught the darkness
Is piercing save God's all-seeing eye.

Such is a picture of the disobedient, the distrustful, the fearful; for "the wicked flee when no man pursueth."

But the obedient, free from alarms, are at rest. The Lord is their strength and refuge; and in him have they their peace. Yet peace is obtained at no less price than obedience, and this involves, frequently, struggles and conquests before peace can be enjoyed.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### VICTORY OVER SELF AND CIRCUMSTANCE.

All life calls for careful discriminations; the higher the life, the finer must distinctions be made. The conception of contentment that would befit a brute, if he has any such conception at all, would not avail for man; and the idea of contentment that a lazy man might entertain would prove wholly inadequate for an active, energetic man. Indeed, two Christians might disagree as to the propriety of predicating contentment at all of the genuine Christian life, one averring that contentment is the bane of the church, that her members are too contented, too well satisfied with conditions as they are, and not sufficiently active in extending the kingdom of God; the other declaring that the church ought always to be contented with the divine providences which have marked out her lot and her experiences, and, without murmurings or complainings, ought to plod steadily on about her work. The two seem to disagree, but the disagreement is only

in words. A careful distinction in meaning shows that each would assent cheerfully to the divine will, and feel discontented only with human achievements in accomplishing the divine intent. The Christian should acquiesce in all divine purposes, and never be indifferent to them: that is the true theory of contentment for him.

In like manner, unless distinctions are made, contradictions appear in the invitations of Jesus. He calls the weary and heavy-laden to him for rest, and yet declares that no man who fails to take up his cross daily is worthy of him, as though discipleship meant both repose and toil, both ease and hardship. But the discrimination which the Gospel affords renders the paradox plain: Jesus invites the world to a release from the burdens of sin and to an acceptance of the obligations of righteousness; he does not call one to an inanity, or to a voluptuary's paradise.

While, therefore, Jesus provides for his followers a transcendent repose, he assigns to them at the same time all the strivings with temptation, all the responsibilities of his mission, and all the opportunities of his kingdom; they must agonize to enter in by the strait gate, they must labor in the vineyard, they must administer faithfully the talents intrusted to them, they

must bear the burdens and the crosses, and endure the crucifixion, if need be; "it is enough for the disciple that he be as his master." And how that Master toiled! After his ministry began, he made no earthly home his resting place; his meat was to do the will of him who sent him; he was obliged ever to accomplish that work.

There are two ways of treating the tribulations of this world: one is to surrender to them with a whine and with complaint; the other is to face them calmly and courageously, and make the best of them.

Were we to tabulate and magnify hardships, the list might be formidable. In the sweat of our faces do we eat bread; daily must we toil; the land produces weeds faster than crops; houses decay; possessions vanish because of moth, rust, thieves, and changing conditions; mills suspend operations; bonds depreciate; friends frequently prove faithless; death often claims the most loved one; human society is fickle; governments do not always govern, — and so the tale might be prolonged. Distress, disappointment, affliction, trial, trouble come to all. We might hang our harps on the willow and sit ourselves down by the waters of Babylon and weep. Niobe in her tears, Rachel inaccessible to consolation, might appro-

priately be our models, were we to count only woes and hardships.

Pessimism has its data. But pessimism merely interprets one set of facts, which are facts, nevertheless; views but one side of truth, a side of truth, however, which we must remember. There are evils in the world, manifold and insistent. But why? Are they ends in themselves? Do they mark out the destiny of mankind? Do they, indeed, preponderate in life, and, when the pleasurable has passed away, are they to be the residuum? Ah, no. And here pessimism is wholly wrong. The life and the teaching of Jesus show that ills and trials and hardships are but incidental in shaping human destiny; they are disciplinary at most. It is not intended that they shall overcome man, as pessimistic philosophy maintains, but that man shall overcome them, and from the process of overcoming emerge a stronger, better, nobler man, refined by his very hardships.

The lazy, slothful farmer, who rises after the sun is up, leans against the doorpost and whittles sticks by the hour, while he observes the weather, and curses the rain, when it is wet, and when it is hot, the sunshine, may well think that the whole world is coming rapidly to want. He does not coöperate with the recreative, constructive forces of nature. He sees

only the laws of decay, degeneracy, and ruin, — laws which are in the minority when opposed, but easily hold sway, if the majority stand aside and let them operate. The farmer has in his power the pivotal choice — which shall win on his farm: sloth and poverty, or industry and thrift.

The man of toil and push and courage is no pessimist. His acres are broad and fertile, his buildings snug and firm. What optimistic barns he has, with bursting mows, and sleek cattle! There is a merry, opulent sound to the jingle of his chains, and the rattle of his carts. He has overcome his world. The rocks, the stumps, the weeds, hillsides, meadows, bottom-land, — he has overcome them all. He is master; at his royal command they do his bidding.

The labor of brawn and muscle and strong determination has a kingly might. Its sovereign ukase is universally heeded. It bids great rivers wed their banks, and, lo! there springs, like heaven's bow of promise, the bond of union from either shore, great bridges, highways of intercourse. It tames the lightning's dangerous pranks, and renders it a Ganymede to discharge its errands, and deliver its messages in distant parts of the world. Following invention's suggestions, labor overleaps space, penetrates earth's deepest recesses, drags forth antiquity's secrets, lays its hand on tired hu-

manity's head, and brings the ministrations of soothing devices, — indeed, copes with all distresses and relieves their bitterness. *Labor omnia vincit*, said the Romans, and the schoolboy writes it now on the fly leaf of his book: *Labor overcomes everything.* In Eden labor may have been a curse; but under conditions which we Adams and Eves, outside the flaming gate, must now face and contend with, labor is our best boon and benefactor. In the industrial world it restores us to our lost estate, brings us back to our paradise. By hard toil we enter once again the garden, and come beneath the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, with the possibilities of power once more in our hands.

Mankind may be of cheer. Laments, complaints, and pessimistic moanings are repudiated by all human experience. Circumstances are not against us.

> "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
> But in ourselves, that we are underlings."

We can make the tribulations of this world yield us good. We can overcome the world. "Where there is a will, there is a way."

> "Cassius from bondage will deliver Cassius:
> . . . . . .
> Nor stony tower, nor walls of beaten brass,
> Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron,
> Can be retentive to the strength of spirit."

This world, though a stubborn foe, becomes a valuable servant. It awaits our conquests. It can be overcome.

But, it has been urged, two factors account for all individual peculiarities and characteristics, and determine human destiny — heredity and environment. All can agree with the genial poet-doctor, who said that the training of a child should begin with his grandmother, for we all know that, while size and temper and beauty are determined in horses and cattle and sheep by care in breeding, we, human animals, inherit from our ancestors peculiarities of mind and body. This is a matter of common observation, as well as of scientific demonstration.

Blood tells. And what a sorry plight for thousands of earth's little ones; blood, vicious, diseased, alcohol-crazed, lust-inflamed, the venom of satanic spleen in every heart-beat, such blood is theirs, the children of innocency, thus cursed through no fault of theirs! Parentage implies an awful immortality; unto the third, and fourth, and succeeding generations the lives of parents go on and on. Statistics of the famous "Jukes" family have shown that, with scarcely an exception, the progeny of one wicked woman, numbering in several generations one hundred and sixty, came, with her

vices in their blood, to the brothel, the prison, the poorhouse, and the insane asylum.

But while the evil that men do lives after them, the good is not interred with their bones; the good likewise survives. Fathers and mothers may rejoice in this, that holy ambitions, earnest endeavors, sweet and patient living, project themselves forward into their children's lives with abiding blessings. Heredity, therefore, imparts to every child contending forces and tendencies, some for good and some for evil, — the invariable characteristics of human nature, warfare within the soul. The contending forces vary in different individuals. In that "Jukes" family the evil overwhelmingly predominated; in other families good tendencies are supreme.

The social standard of judging men is not God's standard; the social standard is based on absolute merit. God's judgment takes into account men's talents and possibilities; of him to whom many talents have been committed much is required; of him to whom few talents have been given, but little is expected. God takes account of advantages and disadvantages; he demands that only of which one is capable; and so, in his sight, every child, whatever its inherited tendencies, starts upon an equal plane, in perfect innocency, with no sin scored

against him, and no merit to his credit. Sin and merit are both to be determined by the degree of fidelity with which each in his place, with his talents, responds to his possibilities. Each child must make his own character ; each has certain possibilities ; those possibilities constitute his world for conquest. At least, within the scope of his possibilities is he free. For the winning of the approval of God, therefore, none are handicapped.

Environment is now generally looked upon as a stronger factor in life than heredity, for it has been proven that nine out of ten of the children placed in good homes by the Children's Aid Society of New York turn out well, and eight out of ten of the criminals who receive the influences of Elmira Reformatory subsequently live honest lives. Surroundings exert a powerful influence. It has been averred that a human being "left in infancy without the help and stimulus of human companions, would, even if able to survive, yet never manifest distinctively human traits ; nothing of that which is highest and most characteristic in man comes to him apart from instruction ;" and it has been found, by the sad experience of a child in India, that a child grown up among wolves will run on all fours like a wolf, eat, snarl, and take his enjoyment as do the wolves.

And yet, while we fully acknowledge the great potency of these influences within us and without us, — whether we maintain with Darwin and Spencer that acquired characteristics can be transmitted, or with Haeckel and Weissmann that they cannot be transmitted, — this we all know (for experience and observation teach it daily), a man is more than his inheritances and more than his surroundings, — he can rise above them, — he can overcome them; the power of will is superior to heredity and environment. Let us appeal to familiar instances. What made Grant, Grant? His surroundings? Horse-breaking and log-rolling? When but twelve years of age, young Ulysses with a pair of horses was hauling logs two miles to be used in a county jail which his father had contracted to build. One day the man who loaded the wagon did not come on account of severe rains. The boy would not return with an empty wagon. He discovered a slanting maple-tree close at hand; near this he backed the wagon, and then with one horse drew the heavy logs, one by one, up the side of the tree and twitched them on to the load. Grant in conquering his logs was making Grant, the successful general.

Did environment make James A. Garfield? Born in a log cabin, fatherless at eighteen

months, poor, and without friends; at seventeen, tramping the tow-path; when bent upon school, cutting one hundred cords of wood in fifty days at fifty cents a cord. What made Garfield? Garfield himself. And our Lincoln, that Kentuckian rail-splitter, what made him? The eminent geologist, Hugh Miller, was once but a stone-cutter. The renowned linguist, Elihu Burritt, came from a blacksmith's shop. Is environment the explanation? Benjamin Franklin, Daniel Webster, Horace Greeley, Horace Mann, and thousands of others, no less conspicuous, have risen to eminence from humble circumstances, by courage, perseverance, and constant application conquering the world about them. How many of our most famous and renowned men can sing, with Whittier, —

> "Blessings on thee, little man,
> Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan!
> With thy turned-up pantaloons,
> And thy merry whistled tunes;
> With thy red lip, redder still
> Kissed by strawberries on the hill;
> With the sunshine on thy face,
> Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace;
> From my heart I give thee joy —
> I was once a barefoot boy!"

What worlds have been overcome by persistent effort! Demosthenes, practicing on the seashore with pebbles in his mouth, broke him-

self of stammering and indistinct articulation. Professor Von Treistchke of Berlin University, a most popular lecturer, though deaf and dumb, yet learned to articulate by studying, as deaf mutes may, the physical action of the vocal organs. Laura Bridgeman was blind, as well as deaf and dumb, and had been partially deprived of the senses of taste and smell; touch alone, and that blunted, remained to her for contact with men and things. What a world of darkness and isolation shut her in! but, by those little instruments, the nerves residing in her finger-tips, she overcame her world of darkness and seclusion — patient, wonderful Laura Bridgeman! Even more marvelous are the results that Helen Keller is achieving in the same way to-day.

What patient courage, what unwavering determination does the successful musician evince before earning his musical freedom, — enduring long days and years of unremitting bondage to the mechanical details of notation, theory, and execution! What a world of hindrance and tribulation does the pianist, or organist, encounter in the obstinate inelasticity of that third finger! The artist, how formidable his world, — perspective, pose, color, tone, composition! He lodges in garrets, lives on crusts, ransacks the byways and galleries of all Europe

for subjects and inspiration, overcoming all the time his world. The author puts days of patient thought and careful pruning into single lines.

Geniuses are not exempt from hardship and toil; rather, because of hardships and toils are they geniuses. "For him who toils, God helps," said Euripides; and Sophocles averred, "To those who act not, fortune is no ally." The Vedas wisely exhort,

> "Perform all necessary acts, for action
> Is better than inaction; none can live
> By sitting still and doing naught; it is
> By action only that a man attains
> Immunity from action."

We can acquire habits of mind and temper; we can overcome ourselves, our laziness, our idleness, our forgetfulness, our selfishness. Will is a factor in the destiny of man greater than hereditary influences and the effects of environment combined. Mr. W. M. F. Rounds, who is qualified to speak, says, "I wish to put myself on record, after a study of the criminal, and contrary to my previous utterances, as going squarely back to the doctrine of free will as laid down by our fathers." Dr. G. A. Gordon states it as the conclusion of a large number of thinkers that genius and saintliness

are transcendent, above heredity and environment. Dr. A. H. Bradford in his very helpful study, "Heredity and Christian Problems," cites the case of a colored woman whose heritage was vicious and criminal, and whose circumstances of life since childhood had been such as to tend to the development of passion, who, nevertheless, despite blood and environment, had turned from her old surroundings and old friends, and had made a new life for herself; another case of a woman, whose home was utterly distasteful, without the least love between herself and husband, who, however, after years of such conditions, constantly growing worse, by a simple act of will decided that a new domestic life must begin, and set herself, unaided, to accomplish this, and it did begin; and a third case, of a man of fine and noble character, who had risen to the front rank of his profession out of an heredity which he called "all pure devil."

Instances of the supremacy of will every thoughtful person has observed innumerable times. The wisdom of that discreet philosopher, Rev. John Todd, whose "Student's Manual" our grandparents conned, has been amply vindicated. "Do not fear," he says, "to undertake *any* habit which is desirable; for it *can* be formed, and that with more ease than

you may at first suppose. *Let the same thing, or the same duty, return at the same time every day, and it will soon become pleasant.* No matter if it be irksome at first; but how irksome soever it may be, only let it return periodically, every day, and that without any interruption for a time, and it will become a positive pleasure."

The world of sin and temptation can be withstood. As witnesses there comes before us a multitudinous array of the saints of all ages, and of saints of to-day, in our own communities, who resist temptation and drive evil from their hearts. "Be of good cheer," bade Jesus; "I have overcome the world."

For Jesus it was a world such as we encounter, a world of poverty. The poor man's offering was brought to the temple when he was forty days old, at his mother's purification; he had not where to lay his head; he lived the life of an humble carpenter.

It was a world of forgetfulness for our Master. Throngs followed him and then in fickleness turned from him; they waved palm branches before him one day, and then, within a week, cried, "Crucify him, crucify him!" His most intimate friends and trusted companions swore unwavering allegiance and yet within twenty-four hours, when danger threat-

ened, either skulked into hiding or denied on oath that they were acquainted with him.

He was beset by most subtle temptations: to exercise his power for his own personal comfort, — "Command that these stones be made bread;" to trust himself presumptuously to his own divine nature and the divine oversight, — "Cast thyself down: he shall give his angels charge concerning thee;" yea, and to accomplish in a moment the very mission of his life, — the conquest of the world, — by yielding to the world's plans and ideals through bowing down unto Satan, — "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me;" but he resisted all. Truly, he was tempted in all points, like as we are; yet he sinned not.

It was a world of sordidness, passion, meanness, narrowness, bigotry, strife, anger, and contention which Jesus overcame. He did not avoid it; he did not isolate himself from it; he did not neglect it; nay, he sought it, he voluntarily came to it, he made himself a part of it, he faced its affronts and asperities. He overcame it.

A marvelous model! As he walked the hills of Galilee and the streets of Jerusalem, he overcame anger of speech, when men reviled him; overcame impatience, when men deserted

him; overcame resentment, even when they crucified him, tenderly pleading, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

The world can never exhaust the significance of that supreme sacrifice on Calvary; and yet even a greater sacrifice was made at heaven's gate, when the Lord Christ parted from the glory with his Father, for which he once prayed, and came to earth, taking upon himself the likeness of man, laying aside his heavenly power and majesty, descending to Bethlehem's mean manger, to Judea's factions and prejudices and sins. Ah, that advent, that incarnation! what a victory then was won over the world! If purity ever had repugnance for impurity, if power ever was loath to lay aside its prerogatives, if majesty ever hesitated to humble itself, if heaven ever proved attractive, why did not the beloved Son of God then remain in heaven's glory at the right hand of the Father? The world lost in sin, steeped in its iniquities, so obtuse to spiritual influences, was then overcome; love won its greatest battle; love then conquered the world, and brought its own revelation and atonement to man. This was the greatest conquest ever conceived of, a victory for our sakes, a victory of sacrifice, a victory not only for an example, but of power, for it gave us a Saviour and a Life.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE MINISTRY OF EVIL.

Evils are divisible into three groups: —

There are evils which come upon us from natural causes, such as earthquakes, whirlwinds, excessive heat, excessive cold, drought, floods, lightning, blight, and many plagues and pestilences, — evils that may be said to be the dispensations of Providence, or the works of God.

Another group embraces evils which arise immediately or remotely from the misdeeds of men. Some are inherited from wrongs of long ago; others spring forth from present social conditions, and seem to be necessary accompaniments of modern life. Many of the disasters which we ascribe to God are really from man. Cholera issues not from God but, beginning in unclean customs of the Orient, spreads among pilgrims to Mecca through promiscuous bathing in plague-infected, albeit "sacred," water, and is carried in infested clothing to all corners of the earth. God does not send the

plague; it is man who disseminates it. Typhoid fever breeds in foul sinks and sewers, for which human ignorance or carelessness are responsible. It is man, in unwholesome, sometimes immoral and dishonest social conditions who sets evils in motion the effects of which, disastrous and dire, are often imputed to divine wrath or divine indifference. Poverty and distress are usually man-occasioned. Their causes lie sometimes in actual vice, sometimes in laziness and waste, sometimes in ignorance; and sometimes bad laws are to blame, the effects of which in subtle ways, scarcely perceived by social economists, and never dreamed of by those who suffer, bring seasons of widespread business depression, of uncertain money supply, and of opportunities for extortions, exactions, and injustice by individuals or corporations.

In the third place, there are evils which are self-occasioned, — evils to the body, because the body is abused; evils to the mind, because the mind is not cared for and kept in its favorable atmosphere; evils to the conscience and soul, because the higher nature in its thousand needs, activities, and possibilities is dwarfed, starved, destroyed.

These three kinds of evils may be termed natural, communal, and individual. The groups do not always remain distinct; all evils may

not satisfactorily submit to this classification, and yet the groups are sufficiently definite to enable us to see how limitation of different kinds is possible, and how the ministry of evil may be made beneficial to the soul.

The third group of evils, the individual, may be terminated by an act of will; for they lie within the scope of man's control. This is true in theory at least, and may be approximated in practice. The perfect man would have no personal evils. If living in obedience to all laws of his body, the body would be sound and serviceable in every part, — barring, of course, hereditary defects and results of unavoidable accidents. The Creator has so made these wonderful human frames that every part seeks ever to repair its own wastes, to supply deficiencies in other parts, and, eliminating poisons and warding off hurtful assaults, to protect itself and the whole from harm. As an expression of its own nature, the human system strives constantly to perfect itself. If we but intelligently coöperated with it or even ceased to hinder its operations, it would speedily remove from us a vast amount of evil.

Old age, in truth, must be faced, for even the strongest and most robust at length fail and die; but the ripe fruition of a life, coming to its end according to natural processes, should

be termed no more an evil than the withering of a flower, when its life has been perfected in the germinant seed. The wasting of physical strength in the fullness of old age is as natural as the stopping of a clock, when its store of energy from the spring, or the weight, has been exhausted. Old age and death indicate maturity. They are the normal stages of promotion to a riper, higher existence. Early death and physical breakdown in middle life alone are really evil. But, by conformity to laws, written in our physical members, these might be largely avoided. Allowing for inheritances and maladies incurable, the physical infirmities still within an individual's control are multitudinous. No one yet knows the possibilities of his physical well-being.

Evils of remorse for sins committed, of regret for opportunities wasted, of sorrow over unkindness done and pain inflicted, of spiritual blight and soul-unrest because of estrangement from God, — these are evils subject to the will of man, not in theory only but in practice; they are limitable to an hour and a moment, and may be ended when the individual by his own free choice puts himself in harmonious contact with divine grace.

But the other two groups of evils, the natural and communal, are wholly beyond the

power of the individual. Before them he seems hopeless; they loom up as fate; he can neither avoid nor overcome them; they at times threaten to crush him in their path. He cannot give wisdom and judgment to the mass of men: he can at best simply found schools and help set in operation agencies for the slow education of future generations. He cannot impart a sense of justice and righteousness to legislators and executors of the law: he can but strive to arouse his fellow-men to a due recognition of the importance of these excellent qualities in public servants, and at the polls can register his opinion by one vote. Sometimes he may be able to publish text-books on ethics, or write editorials in influential journals, or preach sermons to listening multitudes, or himself sit in halls of legislation, assisting in the enactment of laws for the execution of righteousness and truth in the land; but usually he must simply wait and suffer, while his fellow-men, massed in an almost frenzied multitude, pursue what seems to be a relentless way.

Neither can the individual avert the fury of the storm and hurricane, nor turn aside the heat of the sun, nor stay mysterious shocks of earthquake. A somewhat feeble attempt at foretelling and warning people of the ap-

proach of such dread visitations is all that at present has been attained.

Have these ineluctable disasters and misfortunes a mission? or are they, as frequently termed, "an unmitigated evil?"

In describing the tender care of the Father for his children, Jesus once illumined the problem of evil by the following pregnant words: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Evils have a legitimate place in the economy of God; they *have* a mission; they serve some good purpose; about them is an adequacy, for a time at least; they are sufficient for to-day.

The scientist has yet to discover a single animal or plant, however noxious or deadly, which, in the scale of being and in the wide service of nature to man, has not some direct or indirect beneficent effect. The moralist, too, I think, has yet to find a single burden, pain, trial, or tribulation, ever laid upon humanity's shoulder, which is not in some way tributary to physical, mental, moral, or spiritual development. Horace Bushnell once wrote a book, the value of which is yet unabated, upon "The Moral Uses of Dark Things;" and Dr. John Watson's (Ian Maclaren's) "The Potter's Wheel" makes plain the same lesson, how good may come out of evil. The writer

of the epistle to the Hebrews also expressed this thought: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

Discipline is the great benefit; and yet what does discipline signify?

Natural and communal evils make men prudent and sagacious. The severities of winter account for most of the differences between a thrifty, energetic population in northern latitudes and a more indolent, listless population near the equator. In the history of the world rugged hills and cold regions have contributed world-conquerors. Northern races, moving southward, have usually degenerated in energy and manhood in the midst of teeming fertility and prodigal abundance. Wealth primarily represents an effort to provide for impending times of need. Were the present altogether affluent and satisfactory, mankind would think but little of future needs. "Let us eat, drink, and be merry," is the cry of the voluptuary, unconscious of hardship or suffering. It is because of storms that the government maintains a Weather Bureau giving daily prognostications. Necessity has become the fertile mother of thousands of inventions. Hardship

requires man to inspect natural conditions and foresee impending changes; he can scarcely help becoming observant; and consequently insight and foresight issue as the permanent benefactions of evil.

Then, also, evils develop strength. It is the burden-bearers who can bear burdens, the busy who can work. Those who are coddled and petted are generally idle and useless, inert in mind and flabby in muscle. A self-made man, so-called, is merely a man who has been obliged to face hardships in life with little or no help, and has become what he is, whether self-made or otherwise, by enduring the hardships, winning in the struggles, and overcoming the difficulties. When at length he is strong, people term him "self-made."

Some kinds of evils develop, also, breadth of mind and sympathy. The saints of earth who can best appreciate another's circumstances and most effectively render assistance are those who have tried life in some of its bitterest portions. Through experience they have learned to see and understand. A deep philosophy for all of human need lies in the fact that Jesus Christ was tempted in all points like as we are; he, therefore, is touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Because of this bond of sympathy, we can be assured of his nearness to us, and

can realize his contact with our life in suffering. Suffering makes the whole world kin. Pain brings all classes to a level. Grief and sorrow obliterate distinctions; and, therefore, they who sorrow learn to know men.

Still further, the evils in life tend to produce confidence and courage. Repulses from without, throwing a man back upon himself and his own resources, make him self-reliant. The sailor who has weathered storms fears not an approaching gale; vessel, sails, rope, and spar, he confidently trusts, because he has tried them. So in life's voyages, the buffeting of winds, of waves, and tempests prepares the voyager for another day's voyage.

But one of the best of all benefits from evils is the preparations for peace which they give to man. So obtuse are our perceptions that we seldom appreciate blessings until deprived of them. Home means most to us after a period of deprivation. How good the sunshine is after days and weeks of cloud and rain! How sweet the quiet when the day's turmoil of hurry and anxiety and painful labor is over! How good is peace when the battle is won! Indeed, that for which we have toiled, we appreciate; that which has cost us pain becomes precious. Anguish, a high price, is, nevertheless, often the only price at which contentment can be purchased.

Ah, the discipline of trial is not a myth! Even the sad burlesques of trial and suffering which men, in their cravings for peace of conscience, have brought upon themselves only prove the reality of the peace which human experience has often found in the throes of pain. Many a religious enthusiast, particularly of the Orient, has deemed lacerations of the flesh obligatory as an act of merit not only to win divine favor, but also to render the spirit open and receptive to the tenets of faith which his religion offers. The terrible ordeal of hook-swinging in India, — in which the great hook of iron holds a worshiper by the livid flesh and allows him to swing back and forth high above the heads of a gathered multitude, an object of pious wonderment, — is but a mistaken, incongruous plea for peace by the way of pain.

Martin Luther was seeking peace when he climbed the staircase at Rome on his knees. The doctrine of penance rests largely upon this very principle, that pain is both propitiatory and palliative. Fasting finds its justification to-day, wherever it is justified, because of its disciplinary effects upon the soul and its preparation, thereby, for deeper spiritual experiences. A hermit in lonely cell, with self-immolation, scourgings, hair shirt, thongs, watchings, and scanty supplies of food, is simply seeking peace

*via dolorosa.* Simeon Stylites on his pillar, year by year ascending ever higher, until at last sixty-six feet above ground, unable night or day to recline, lived out his life, having crucified the body by thirty-seven years of slow torture, in a frenzied attempt to obtain the full fruits of the discipline of suffering.

Surely there is a great and holy mission in pain and trial; but Jesus taught, also, that evils are not to be courted and sought. Simeon on his pillar, and every human being, whether hermit or not, who solicits hardships and trials to abide with him, is but plucking evil out of all the days and heaping it upon himself in one day. Evil is sufficient for the day; it must abide in its day. While it serves a purpose, yet that purpose is limited to the present. No day may rightly plunder another day of its share. No forward look may rightly anticipate evil and bring it back, even in thought, as an accumulation for to-day. Do not cross the bridge until you get to it; do not suffer pain until it is necessary; take no anxious thought for the morrow: these are maxims which accord with the wisdom of divine revelation, as well as of human experience. Out of to-morrow draw back none of its burdens.

Doubtless the surest way to escape hell is, not so much to fear hell and strenuously avoid

it, as to bear, little by little, as they come, the burdens of life, even if they seem like an infliction of punishment itself. The safest road to greatness is not by anticipating great deeds, but by performing little ones in their opportunity. Holiness is never a great straining after future excellence; it is rather perfection in small, present graces.

To-day, simple to-day, the plain commonplace Now, without extraordinary experiences, divested of all flavor of martyrdom and glory, to-day, with its ordinary routine, with its frugal, yet ample opportunities, to-day is the accepted time in our Lord's sight. To-day is sufficient; it has an adequate supply of trial for discipline and development, is significant enough in all equipment for the finest fruits of Christian experience. To-day is the entrance to heaven as it is the escape from hell. To-day unlocks all the future, though containing none of that future. To-day and its equipment are enough. Were man to have only to-day, this single day and no more, yet in this day could be settled all the destinies of the entire human family. To-day is enough to deal with evil, cope with evil, and determine the significance of evil to the soul.

Another teaching of the Master makes the mission and scope of evil plainer. As the evil of to-morrow must not be brought back into to-

day, so is it true that no evil should be taken out of to-day and carried forward into to-morrow. Evil must abide in its day; its sufficiency is momentary, not prolonged. Nightfall is meant as a barrier to the passage of evil, to or fro, either from the future into the present, or from the present into the future; it is a time of settlement, — the clearing-house of pain. We must carry no sorrow into the night; and borrow no trouble from beyond to-night. Pain may fit us for to-morrow, but it must be the pain of to-day. The past may have trained us and developed us for to-day, but the pain we leave behind, taking with us only its peaceable fruits.

The burdens of life have their place in God's good providence, but that place is on the shoulder, never at the back, and never before, an hindrance to the feet and a menace to the face.

There are unfortunate men and women who carry burdens ever with them, and accumulate woes as the ragman gathers junk. This is not Christ-like. We have seen men and women living in constant, anxious dread of dire misfortune, of some evil sure to happen. This likewise is not Christian. Jesus forcibly said, "Let the dead bury their dead." Birth and death belong to a day, and cannot be indefinitely repeated.

Burden-bearers may take comfort in the thought that, though the struggles with diffi-

culty be hard and prolonged, oft repeated, yet there is a time for rest; no burden may rightfully go out of its day. We may lay it down, and unbend the yoke. We may place our burden on him who bears the sin of the world. Joy cometh in the morning. We should begin every day anew; we must not let trials and tribulations become monotonous. That which was yesterday's must remain with yesterday. To-day has enough. We must check the whining tone, and guard the peevish complaint and querulous spirit. We must throw off anxious forebodings, relieve strained nerves, and relax taut energies, to bathe in thoughts of divine goodness and grace.

If evils are limited to their day, shut within their own natural barriers, borne neither in anticipation nor by retrospection, but only in actual experience, then will they bless mankind. Their ministry is for good; but un-christian men frequently become bitter during discipline, morose and pessimistic under trial; it is because they fail to deal with evils rightly. Christians become sweeter, more hopeful, more helpful, realizing that "whom the Father loveth, he chasteneth;" and the hand that smites bears also the balm that heals. Blessed, then, be the extremity that helps us to know the loving-kindness of him who draws near in the time of need. Self-discipline means self-realization.

## CHAPTER X.

### CHARACTER, THE PORTAL TO VISION.

WHAT a man is determines what he sees. Environment goes for naught unless he have the power of relation to environment. Man is the solution of circumstance, not the creature of circumstance. The world culminates in every man : what his character is decides what the character of all else shall be to him.

There really is no God for the wicked; they see him not, they know him not. They may behold a projection of their own unrighteousness, and call it "God;" "Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed;" they may see a grotesque image of wrath and vengeance, but it is not God. God is discernible to the pure in heart only. To the froward, unto whom the Psalmist says he appears froward, God's real character does not appear at all.

Judas could not have written one of the Gospels. His suicide was but expressive of him-

self. Though with Jesus as long as any of the disciples, he saw not Jesus; thirty pieces of silver assumed larger proportions in his eyes than did the Lord.

"What is truth?" asked Pilate. Pilate was a moral coward; desiring to free Jesus, thrice attempting his release, yet condemning him to death and impotently washing his hands because of his wife's dream, Pilate could not then see truth, and the Christ made no reply.

Simon Magus would give money for the power of the Holy Ghost; but he was not willing to give himself. He and his money were, therefore, cursed to perish together; for his silver and his soul were, indeed, not much unlike.

The Bible bears its own attestation upon its face. What it is is seen in every part. The pure in heart in all ages, the truest, noblest, and best men and women have always found in it a revelation of God. Could a forger of the second century, a liar at heart, have written the Gospels, and invented the Christ? As soon think of thistles bearing figs! Martin Luther reasoned on this wise: the self-vindication of the Word of God is conclusive; that which reveals truth, must be true; that which shows God, must partake of the divine.

Was Jesus Christ the Son of God? Miracles are not the only appeal, nor yet the bare asser-

tions of Scripture. The life itself is in evidence. Take the smallest residuum of criticism, even of hostile criticism, and then declare whether *man* ever spake as he! Where is the duplicate of such compassion as his, such patience as his, such tenderness, such bravery, such forgiveness? When and where has the world ever matched his teaching, in simplicity, in penetrativeness, — going directly to the conscience, — in power to mold and shape those who hear and heed it? The character of the Christ is unique, incomparable in the world's history. It is seen by those who have the capacity to appreciate, even in part, the incomparable, to see the divine.

The judge in any court house, as he presides, in all his rulings, in all his charges, discloses day by day less of law than of himself.

The journalist in any editorial sanctum, daily coining thought for thousands of careless readers and giving shape and policy to an enterprising, successful newspaper, is yet recording more of his own inner biography than of the wide world's news. The careless reader reads the news; but the observant discover in every line the genius of the newspaper, and know the personality in the managing chair.

The physician with his phials and prescriptions is yet more than all he brings and applies,

or prescribes. He is read, discerned, looked for, leaned upon. Though he diligently set to work to cultivate a non-committal exterior, in order to avoid awakening needless alarm or raising false hopes, yet by even a dull eye his spirit and character and many of his fears and hopes are seen.

The preacher in the pulpit preaches himself more than sermons. Those hearers most like the preacher know the real preacher best. It is his life that gives power to his words. At least, what the people think him to be is the measure of his influence upon them. He may preach Christ, far above himself, and yet, year in and year out, he lifts his hearers toward Christ only as he himself draws near to Christ. His soul must needs be the great high priest between men and God. If he be pure, he sees God; as they see him, so they through him are led to see God.

The teacher really teaches personality, and little else. A, b, c's are remembered; some tables in arithmetic are remembered, a few rules and dates, — but after all not many. The teacher, however, is never forgotten. Old men remember the teachers of even their most youthful days. Teachers have assigned lessons, but teachers, unassigned, have been studied even more. Teaching is really a matter of

contagion, rather than instruction. The intellectual and moral, as well as the spiritual life, are imparted by contact. Character arouses character, inspires character, really makes character. What the teacher is determines what the teacher teaches; and what the pupil is determines, no less, what the pupil receives.

Parents may exhaust themselves and exhaust their children by precepts and exhortations, while pouring forth the wisdom of Solomon, even adding the rod thereto, without materially benefiting son or daughter. All that is on the lips is of little avail; but whatever is in example, — that never fails. Example is character in expression. Children do not seriously heed what they hear; they do follow what they see. What a father is, therefore, rather than what he professes determines the amount of fatherhood which he bestows upon his children.

Every man, whatever his trade or calling, gives to the world more than the products of his business and toil. He gives himself, unintentionally, unconsciously, yet inevitably. What he is, all about him partake of, and in proportion as they resemble him do they approach a full realization of what he is and partake of him fully.

Character is the open door through which a man looks out and sees the world; it is also the

open door through which other men look in and discover him.

Men always behold a reflection of themselves in the world. The painter sees color; the sculptor, form; the architect, structure, material, form, and utility combined; the musician hears tones and harmonies; the geologist reads upon the pavement indications of geologic changes; to the botanist all the world is a garden; the biologist studies life even in the water we drink, the dust we inhale, and the very tissues of which the body is composed. Every man in the mirror of the universe beholds himself, or a part of himself. What he is determines his vision; the significance of all the world depends upon the man himself.

Important principles are here involved. Men are restless to-day, seeking changes, clamoring for improvement. They complain of external circumstances, of hard environment, of trials of which they seem helpless victims; and they seek by popular discussion and by legislative enactment to relieve distresses and secure amelioration. They seem to have divided all the world into two factors, themselves on the one hand, and everything else on the other; and to have begun reform by laboring upon the second factor. It is the wrong factor to amend and improve first, if at all. Self-culture

alone gives culture; self must be the starting point.

Many a child has times of wishing, "Oh, if only my father lived in such a house, or was as rich as such a man!" But there would be no greater happiness if the wish were gratified; happiness comes not from houses or wealth.

Many a maiden, I suppose, is foolish enough to look upon another and to sigh within herself, "Ah, if only I had that complexion, and form, and hair, and those eyes!" But attractiveness and winsomeness do not depend upon features which must fade with years, and may vanish in a great sorrow of a single day.

Students not infrequently envy what seem to be the easier circumstances and greater advantages of another. But they, too, look at the wrong factor. He who earns his own way through school and college may have the better opportunity for self-culture, and by the very lack of what he terms advantages may really have the greater advantages. That plodding student, who acquires laboriously and retains with difficulty, may chafe and groan over his grinding toil, as he looks from the window upon a more brilliant classmate who has ample time for tennis, and walks, and chats, and, as later in the classroom, he hears the brilliant man make glib recitation of paragraphs that elude his toil-

some application ; but the end is not yet. Perhaps the slow plodder, after all, gains the more from study and classroom, by his very plodding disciplining himself to prolonged and severe mental labor, fitting himself for work in the great arena of life, for which the other has had no training, and finds at length no disposition. Self is the great factor, self-discipline the true aim.

Few would object to the clamor heard in the industrial world to-day, for higher wages and shorter days, or would not wish that the one were paid and the other granted ; but if those who are so strenously striving after better pay, and a nine or an eight-hour day of labor, were as earnestly seeking also the betterment of self, they would make real gains. Too often the man who complains has sunk himself in the mass. If only he would now assert his manhood, show his personal dignity, stand for himself alone, for truth, for right, for sobriety, honesty, and honorable dealing ; if only he would be a man, every inch of a man, before God and his fellows, — then would his life be truly noble, and the final solution of his difficulties more simple.

There are Christians longing for the quiet, even temperament of some other Christian, scarcely realizing that their best garden-plot

for all Christian graces is in their own souls, that their deficiencies, even their perversities, are opportunities for self-culture.

What can I make of self? That is the vital question. Self-victory is true achievement. Self is the measure of all perception; self is both the spectacles through which all the world is seen, and the telescope for far distant vision toward other worlds. Self, therefore, is the one chief factor for cultivation.

In modern psychology, particularly as applied to the science of teaching, the term apperception now plays an important part. Apperception is the act of the mind in bringing all of its knowledge to bear upon the recognition of any idea. To illustrate: on beholding a rose-bush, never seen before, what new thing does the observer behold? Does he see the bush in its parts: the leaf, the trunk, the bark, the fiber, the form, the flower? Does he see in the bush anything that he would state in describing the characteristics of the rose? Very little indeed, if anything; really a new rose-bush is to an observer simply a stimulation, from without, coming to him by way of vision, to call up in his mind all knowledge of rose-bushes which he has previously gained. The form, the fiber, the bark, the trunk, the branch, the leaf, the flower, he sees only as he has seen them

before. An observer perceives chiefly that which he already knows. Past acquisitions determine present acquirements. Even in rose-bush matters what a man is determines what he shall see.

When a company of travelers goes abroad, the man of letters finds literary associations everywhere; the political economist runs upon financial and social data everywhere; the tradesman can pick up bargains on any corner and bring home suggestions for trade from many a street-vender as well as from every great emporium; the philanthropist discovers on every side problems and solutions in reform; so the statesman sees statescraft, the historian historical suggestions, the artist art. All Europe is but a gigantic stimulus to internal apperception. What a man takes with him, that, in ninety-nine parts, he sees, adding perhaps thereto the one hundreth part as a genuine acquisition.

We cannot leave self behind; we cannot drop self out of calculation; we cannot rise above and ignore the self which we have been rearing. We must always live with, depend upon, and employ self. We are self-fettered; but we are not victims of self. While inseparable from ourselves and so limited by our past achievements and present development, yet little by little, even in the hundredth part, we may

master ourselves and gradually make ourselves.

The past has gone, irrevocably, leaving us as we are; but the future lies open. What to-morrow shall hold for us depends upon what we to-day make of ourselves in the small fractional part of gain and improvement of which we are capable. Shall we see rose-bushes to-morrow? Then we must have seen them in part at least before to-morrow comes. Even rose-bush vision is a matter of cultivation. Shall we have eyes for pictures to-morrow? Will virtue win our appreciation? Shall we be able to behold purity? Shall we see God? Self-training prepares for sight.

It is plain what these truths portend. A prophecy of future citizenship lies in the schoolroom. The aptitudes called forth in the pupils assure the qualities and the development of the man. Manhood and womanhood are the fruitage of early impressions and influences.

But present attainments, made in learning the lessons of life, have a prophecy, also, for far distant visions. When a man is through with the pupilage of this earthly experience, what shall he then see? Must not the answer be, he will see that for which he has been fitting himself? Can the sinner see God? Can he perceive that which he has in no degree cultivated in him-

self? Will it be possible for a man to stand upon the summit of the mountain of the New Jerusalem, and look out upon the glories and raptures of the blessed, and take in the enjoyment which they experience, unless he has fitted his soul beforehand, in some degree at least, for those experiences? Can we apprehend more than that for which and by which we are apprehended? Ah, heaven to have significance to a man must have its seat within the man! Heaven must get into him more than he gets into heaven. The New Jerusalem begins within, if it begins at all for us mortals. The soul is the seat of spiritual delectation. It is the pure in heart who shall see God.

These are simple, yet far-reaching truths. What are we? Are we what we would fain be to-morrow, and next year, and always? What do we harbor within? Is it what we shall be satisfied to have ourselves converted into and at length become, for eternity? It is suicide against the higher self, not only that is, but also that may be, to harbor unhallowed and unhallowing thoughts.

A tradesman may be so much of a tradesman, so absorbed, body and soul, in his business as to be capable through all eternity of only dealing in small wares and taking satisfaction in bargains. The lawyer, doctor, teacher, stu-

dent, mill-man, farmer, the toiler of every kind and every grade, may make life but the routine grind of the chosen profession and labor.

We cannot equalize human conditions. It is impossible to bring all men to one level. No Utopian scheme of nationalization or of socialization has yet been wrought out that can be applied, because all men are not intrinsically equal, and cannot enter into equal possessions and responsibilities. The individual is himself; he cannot be changed by the enactment of legislation or by the philanthropy of his fellows, into anything more than what he, by his own mastery over self, will make of himself. Soup-kitchens and back-door charity effect no permanent good. Relief and reform must reach within and come from within.

It is impossible by vote of the church to make men saints. Canonization is a heart process. It is difficult to see how any system of theology can work out the salvation of all men. The individual stands by himself. Whatever God is does not effect what man is, unless man can take and assimilate that which God proffers. God can see man; but will man see God? I can see a stone; can the stone see me? However much I may prize the stone and be well disposed toward it, yet there can be no fellowship between the stone and

me, unless the stone can take on enough of my characteristic to win and appreciate my approval. No analogy of nature and no utterance of revelation warrant the assumption that an embryo while undeveloped shall enter into higher states. It must grow, it must develop; it must have an opportunity for growth and development. Salvation, though accompanied by divine influences and powers, must yet be an achievement by man; it is a process of growth under cultivation, a development from a possibility into an actuality, a struggle for gain and improvement, a cultivation of the pure and noble and spiritual in man.

The pure in heart may see God everywhere. He is not far away on some high Olympus, or in some remote planet. In him we live and move and have our being. Wonderful are the works of his hand. All law expresses his will; all truth reveals his being. He rules in nature and reigns amongst men. Despite the evil deeds of men, God's presence and purposes stand forth in human society both past and present. God is in all the world.

They who have so willed it and have so developed their spirits have divine companionship always. What strength to lean upon God when in trial! What solace to turn to God when in sorrow! What peace to trust in God when

perplexed! What wisdom when God leads the way! They alone who see God in all the affairs of life have learned to make life beautiful; they alone fit in with the plans and purposes of the eternities. They alone behold the evidence and give evidence of the presence of God in human affairs.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE EVIDENTIAL VALUE OF LIFE.

Councils, conferences, and conventions usually issue, as the result of their deliberations, elaborate statements of principles in the form of platforms and resolutions. The first council of the Christian church, however, put forth a very brief circular as the outcome of its conclusions, albeit the matters that had claimed attention were of the utmost importance to the life of the church, and had threatened to rend it asunder.

Should Gentile converts to Christ be required to enter the church by the way of Jewish ceremonialism? That was the question at issue; and the young church was divided in relation to it. Paul had gone forth preaching that circumcision was unnecessary, that a man could become a Christian and unite with the Christian community without regard to his compliance with Jewish ceremonies, indeed, without his knowing a thing concerning their main characteristics. Others — and even Peter wavered here — de-

clared that, since all the promises through Abraham had been made to the Jews, and the Messiah himself had come of the seed of David, the royal Jewish descent, it was necessary, without exception, to become a Jew first, in order next to become a Christian.

The discussion at this council in Jerusalem seems to have been both friendly and exhaustive. Paul and Barnabas related their experience in preaching to Gentiles and receiving Gentiles into the church. Peter called to mind the vision he had had on the housetop, when deliberating whether, or not, to go to Cornelius. James, as chief of the church in Jerusalem, and presiding officer of the council, expressed his opinion, and then the assembly put its conclusions in the form of a letter, to be sent by the hand of Paul and Barnabas and Judas, called Barsabbas, and Silas. The letter read as follows:—

"The apostles and elder brethren unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting: Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment; it seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We

have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well."

Neither the platform put forth by a modern political caucus nor the canons promulgated by a modern ecumenical council would be so brief. As for Jewish ceremonialism, no burdens were laid upon young Christians; they might come directly into the church without circumcision or other Jewish forms. They were required only to avoid arousing Jewish prejudices by partaking of meats unceremonially slaughtered or dishallowed before heathen idols, and they were to keep themselves free from the vice of unchastity, then so common among their Gentile neighbors. Further than this the whole stress of the document was upon the men who bore the message, men who would tell the tale by word of mouth, men who had hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. In substance the council declared: Men of worth will make known our decisions and our spirit better than can a letter. They laid the emphasis, not upon what was stated in words, but upon that which

should be explained by men. This emphasis was a recognition that in religion living testimony is superior to documentary evidence.

God has made, and still makes, revelations of himself in three distinct ways: He communicates directly with man by his Spirit; he shows himself in all his works, this vast miracle of his word which we call nature; and he reveals himself in man.[1] The Bible is but a record of some of the revelations given through these three ways.

There have been times when it was thought that God revealed himself only by means of direct communications; and nature then was supposed to have no message from her Creator to man. But the Psalmist recognized the testimony of nature to God, when he wrote, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork." Modern science confirms daily the fact of the divine presence, in wisdom and power, in all this vast realm of natural law and beauty. All truth declares the will of God. There is, therefore, *a* bible in the latest work on science, if that work be *true*. Every faithful, painstaking investigator of the works of God, if he be like

[1] Of course man is a part of nature, and direct communications are a revelation in man; and yet these three ways have a certain distinctness.

Agassiz, regards every scientific experiment as a prayer to God for knowledge of his ways, and every discovery as an answer to the prayer.

But God reveals himself even more fully in man. He made man in the first place in his own image. Man therefore, might be termed the first piece of sculpture ever made, — fashioned in clay, a likeness of God; not in form and features, for God is a spirit, without material form, — but when breathed into and become a living spirit, then the clay took on characteristics of God and represented, though but partially, the divine mind. Through all the past God has sent men to represent him and to make known his will. He has not attached a revelation in words of great Hebrew letters, or in English terms, to the trees, or penciled them in flaming characters on the clouds, or written them on the wide waters of the seas, or graven them on the rocks, — all this he might have done; but he has sent man to speak to man, himself first giving the word to man, as man himself could receive it.

Moses and Joshua and Samuel and Elijah and Elisha and Isaiah and Jeremiah and all the prophets came as men to men, bearing the word of God. Moses received the spoken word before the two tables of stone were committed to him as memoranda.

Indeed, in the fullness of time, the God-man came, Jesus Christ. No better way in heaven's wisdom could be devised for a revelation to man than by man. The incarnation, the advent, that night in Bethlehem, and all the varied vicissitudes of thirty-three years in Galilee and Judea and Samaria were owing to the fact that man is the best exponent of God to man. When the divine mind would write a revelation capable of human comprehension, then is earth the parchment, flesh and blood the ink, and all the opportunities of time the pen.

We understand in daily life the value of personal conversation. In coming to a business understanding with a man, a five-minute interview is worth a score of written pages. For the same purpose the telephone is worth more than the telegraph, for it allows the exchange of question and answer, of tones and inflections, of moods and intentions, thus imparting more of personality. The printing-press can never supplant the pulpit and the platform. The pulpit and the platform show a man, thinking, speaking, living, and by his very presence and life giving forth influence unto men. The printed page carries a smaller part of personality, merely the thought, sometimes colored by feeling, sometimes inspiring and convincing, but never an adequate exponent of the personality

behind the language. Man is the best means of revelation to man, and the better the man, the better the means. Thirty-three years of Jesus Christ on earth is worth more to the world than thirty centuries of prophets and apostles.

I saw once, in parallel columns, the opinions of two eminent men. One maintained that in politics principles were the great, the only consideration to have in mind; given the right principles in a party platform, it mattered little who the candidates of the party might be; a vote was a vote for the prinicples. The other man maintained that the principles of a party were subordinate to the men nominated by the party; that the men interpreted and, therefore, expressed the principles, and it was impossible to vote for principles apart from the men representing them; that the men must be right. Which of these two reasoned correctly? I have no hesitation in saying, the latter.

No party is better than the men it has in office, whatever its principles and platform may be. Let an official pin the ten commandments on his breast and carry the Bible in his pocket and talk the phrases of the Apostle Paul, and yet, if he is a thief, he will steal. Let him espouse the moral laws that appeal to the conscience of the community, yet if he is himself addicted to immoralities, if he is open to corrup-

tion on the part of law-breakers, he will allow violation and defiance of law, whenever his personal passion or greed are served.

It is men who make politics more than principles. It is men who give good government more than parties. It is men who institute reforms and conduct reforms, and build righteously; it is not an intangible sentiment that can be written upon a piece of paper, like a set of resolutions, or a platform. Hon. Carl Schurz is credited with saying at a conference of Good Government Leagues something to this effect: "If you have an ideal city charter and ordinances, yet put Lucifer in charge, you will have bad government; while, with a very imperfect charter and ordinances, with Gabriel administering affairs, you will yet have good government."

For good government we must select good men. More depends upon Gabriel, or Lucifer, than upon law and ordinances. It matters but little whether, for municipal government, a man be republican, democrat, prohibitionist, mugwump, or populist, provided he be honest, competent, and reliable. To rectify mismanagement and control the governments that effect our homes, happiness, and well-being, we must watch men more than mere party professions.

How shall we improve the conditions of society? How often this question confronts

us to-day! Every labor disturbance, whether in the East or the West, the North or the South, raises the question anew and brands it on our consciences. How improve the condition of the laborer? how equalize possessions? how restore industrial peace and social good-will? The questions are open; the problems are unsolved.

While gains may be expected along the line of legislation and by boards of arbitration and by organized compromises, yet the final solution is to be looked for chiefly in the gradual improvement of the individual man. This is a slow way, an old-fashioned way, but a sure way. The circumstances of the laborer may be hard, but the laborer himself often needs greater change and improvement than his circumstances. Lift him as a man, and he will improve his conditions himself. Set him to climbing, and he will carry his environment with him, as the snail takes his house upon his back. The reformation of society lies in the reformation of the individual man. The history of our country shows that our great men are those who have overcome circumstances by first overcoming themselves.

This truth pertains still more pertinently to the church. It is men who make the church more than creeds. Not all Christians realize this. Some think that if the creed be right,

then the church is of necessity right. Alas! men have labored on creeds, and disputed about creeds, and wrangled, and fought, and shown themselves very unlike their divine pattern, Christ; and the church, whatever the creed resulting, has been a very poor church with such conduct.

Jesus Christ did not take a creed and say, "On this rock will I found my church." We might cease all intellectual activity, the moment we enter the Christian church, had he so done. But he took a man, — an ordinary kind of a man, too, of an impulsive nature, who was up to-day and down to-morrow, — and said in intent, "On *this* rock will I build my church; on weak human nature, like thine, Peter, yet human nature capable of becoming solid and firm, like a rock, Peter, as thou hereafter wilt become; on this rock I build my church."

The Christian church consists of character and conduct more than creed. When Jesus was crucified, he left no written resolutions behind, no charters, constitutions, bylaws, ordinances, canonical laws, — nothing in writing. All the writing he ever did, so far as reported, was on the sand. He left nothing behind but men, and his spirit operative in them. What a legacy for the church!

The apostles, also, had not a scrap of writing

such as we now possess in the New Testament for at least a score of years after the crucifixion. They went about preaching. Gospels, epistles, history of the acts of the apostles: they were making these things; they were themselves the world's New Testament then; they were the epistles known and read of men.

Jesus did not come to bring a Zend Avesta, a Koran, or a Bible even; he came to give life. His last great commission rests wholly upon character and conduct, upon life, his life through the lives of the apostles affecting men.

Wherever the early disciples went, men believed in Christ and partook of the new life. It was not because the disciples carried with them creeds or tracts or Bibles even, but because they carried the life within themselves, and this life communicated itself to others. So has it been always. Where the life is, there it manifests itself. No church has a monopoly. In all communions, about a saintly man there is soon found a garden of saintliness. So has it been with Francis of Assisi, Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas à Kempis, Brother Lawrence, and multitudes of others.

We need have no quarrel with any church or sect not our own. Creeds are attempts at an intellectual definition and explanation of the contents of Christianity; let men hold their

creeds; let us ask only that they evince the Christ-like life in word and work and thought. Life is more convincing than argument. The church truest to the divine pattern will eventually win the allegiance of men. The tree with the best fruit will be cultivated in the orchard. To prove her divine calling the Church must show her divine character. To be Christ-like is to be apostolic.

Life always gives weight to words. The devil quoted Scripture in the temptation, but won no convert, because of what he was and whom he addressed. No preacher's utterances carry greater weight than the force of the personality behind them, either imputed or actually existing. Every preacher must confess with the utmost humility: "It is I that speak more than my brain or tongue; and it is not the I that I would be, or imagine myself to be, or perchance sometime may be, but it is the I that I am now; that and little else that I may say has force." Rhetoric and illustration, logic and clearness have their values; but life alone has power.

In social gatherings, either of the church, or of the home, it matters little whether words be finely put or very faultily phrased; the man or woman who is earnest, sincere, and true impresses us and does us good. It is character

that tells more than profession. Would a man do good? Then must he be good. Would he speak like angels? then must he live like angels. The life both discerns and reveals God. Character obtains and character imparts power from above.

The great argument of Christianity through all time has been Christian living. Learned works do not convince the world of the reality of the Christian religion, as do piety and faith and faithfulness. The reality of life cannot be questioned. Nor can it really be counterfeited. The semblance lacks genuineness, and deceives few. But all the unbelievers in the world cannot answer the argument of Christian living.

The first church did wisely in sending forth, as their representatives, to allay trouble and smooth out difficulties, men who had hazarded their lives for the name of Jesus Christ. Theirs is an example for the present. The heathen nations and tribes of the earth must receive more than the institutions of religion; they must have men to arouse, instruct, inspire. Even that enlightened eunuch, who sat in his chariot reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, could not understand the Scriptures until Philip came, and, in friendly fashion, sitting beside him in the chariot, explained the passage.

"Understandest thou what thou readest?" asked Philip. "How can I," replied the eunuch, "except some one shall guide me?" Personal guidance the heathen world needs.

We must still supply ministers to pulpits, visitors for the poor, and sympathizers for all the suffering. It is impossible to relieve the heart of distress by any mechanical appliance. No modern invention can supplant personal effort in fulfilling the second great commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Every Christian is an instrument of God for revelation and righteousness in the world. He cannot delegate his responsibility to another. Each must render his own part. The Christian disciple has the ability, however few or many may be his talents, however humble or exalted his lot, to reveal the mind of God to his fellows, and thus to be in the line of revelation which has been from Adam's day. However timid and fearful the disciple may be, still he has an opportunity, in the civilization of the nineteenth century of demonstrating to men the reality of the divine in-coming, and the efficacy of the life which is lived in Christ. By his Christian character a man can do for the church he loves what neither books nor papers, sermons, societies, nor organizations can do with-

out him or his personal influence; he can attract men, persuade men, convince men. He has the power of life.

The practical exhortation, therefore, is in order for all. Christians to-day are not in perils as were the prophets and apostles of old. Mob violence, stoning, hanging, or death from sword or fire are far from most. Few need risk life in foreign lands or on boisterous seas. The hazard men face is the hazard of a possible ridicule, a possible scorn or lack of sympathy, a possible alienation of friends, — merely possible, scarcely probable, — but they do face the necessity of self-denial, of earnestness, of watchfulness, of constancy. Yet so much they ought surely to hazard.

Cannot a man realize more clearly the mission he should fill as a revealer of righteousness unto others? When the temptations of business and daily toil confront him, can he not say, "No," for Jesus' sake, and no less for the sake of his business associates? When the appetites and passions of the flesh assail, can he not suppress them for Jesus' sake, and for the sake of the community in which he lives? When the meanness and sordidness of self-seeking and pride threaten to submerge one, can he not struggle yet a little harder to withstand them, for Jesus' sake, and for the good of the world?

When peevishness and pettishness and anger prompt to cross words and unkind deeds at home and among friends and loved ones, can not the Christian still, for the name of Jesus, and for the happiness of those he loves, turn his bitterness into pleasantness and his frowns into smiles?

Surely it is worth trying, trying yet again and with redoubled effort; for character may become eloquent with messages of divine grace; conduct may be more than logic to men; life may be the revelation of God to our fellowmen. The method we employ may be the Master's method promotive of his peace on earth.

## CHAPTER XII.

### PROMOTERS OF PEACE.

When our Lord pronounced the beatitude, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God," obviously he did not mean that *they* are the children of God who by bluster and blows terrify or subdue warring factions into silence, albeit peace results from their efforts. The big bully who with clinched fists lays low each of two quarreling boys, though a peacemaker, is not, we would all agree, thereby a child of God. Nor is the impatient mother in any degree divine, who shakes her children roughly and scolds them into silence.

A dead Indian may be a peaceful Indian, yet killing him is not the proper way of promoting peace. By slaying thousands of cruel savages, neither men nor governments can fit themselves for the kingdom of heaven. England, France, and Germany in their schemes for the partition and colonization of India, Africa, China, and the islands of the sea, may by the

might of armies and navies preserve peace, without deserving in any measure the eulogy of the Master, and without developing in any degree the characteristics of God's children. Those statesmen who declare that the maintenance of great standing armies is but a peace measure, do not thereby display heavenly virtues.

At the birth of Jesus the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased." Jesus himself said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The Son of God came indeed to bring peace, but yet it was a peculiar peace; it was not a peace of the worldly sort, not a peace that came from the exercise of superior force or from effective domination.

Peace of one kind Jesus had nothing to do with: "I came not to bring peace, but a sword." He had no sympathy with those who cried "Peace, peace!" when there was no peace. Under certain conditions he set a father at variance with his son, put mother and daughter in antagonism, and made foes within a household circle. Even in the list of beatitudes he recognizes the existence of intense and active antipathies, which allow no place for the cessa-

tion of hostilities and the return of kindly feeling: "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." This signifies warfare, not peace, — warfare between the good and the evil.

We must recognize at least three distinct kinds of peace, which may be characterized as follows: the first, the peace of surrender; the second, the peace of indifference; and the third, the peace of right relations.

The peace of surrender many a battlefield has known, when one of its great armies, decimated, discouraged, defeated, has accepted the terms of capitulation, laid down arms, given up the object for which it fought, and found rest from carnage.

On the battlefield of life are many souls daily purchasing peace at this price. We see a young man, away from home, toiling early and late in an humble position, lodging alone within four dismal walls; to him life at length becomes monotonous and humdrum; the soul craves excitement. Though long sober and steady, long resisting the allurements of saloon and low entertainment hall, at

length he quiets his restlessness, yields to the cravings of his lower nature, and surrenders up his best manhood. All his previous struggles and labors he throws away. He finds a momentary peace; but at what a fearful cost!

In our great cities, young, unprotected, seeking diligently a hard-earned and scant livelihood, many a girl finds the struggle to maintain her purity and innocence too hard, and yields to the evil so abundant and so persistent about her, for the sake of a little ease, or pleasure, or peace, as her foolish heart may call it.

Two friends meet together and discuss the great problems of life, speaking of God, truth, and religion. One is shrewd, crafty, skeptical; the other, honest, ingenuous, devout. They argue. The memory of one has been stored with quotations and authorities which amaze and perplex the other, who knows only what his heart has taught him. Bewildered, and at a loss for a reply, the latter yields at last to the insistent sophistries of his friend. Argument then ceases; it is peace, but at the price of defeat and surrender.

Many a home circle experiences a similar tragedy of faith. A man and a woman, from different homes, with different degrees of conviction in regard to many social customs and

many fundamental tenets of faith, unite fortunes to found a new home. After frequent periods of contention, good-natured though they be, the stronger will wins and the weaker, for the sake of peace, gives way. But awful is the peace not approved by conscience.

The peace of surrender is sometimes due to cowardice, sometimes to discouragement, sometimes to sheer physical and mental exhaustion. But whatever its cause, its effects are but temporary; it is not an abiding peace; it is loss; it brings soon in its train sadness and sorrow; it is not the peace which Jesus introduced to the world. They who seek this kind of peace are not peacemakers approved of God, worthy to be called the children of God.

A surrender to iniquity will never obtain the peace of righteousness. Woe unto them who yield to the enticements of evil, for, though thinking that they shall obtain the solace of their evil desires, they shall at the end but drink the gall of bitterness and the dregs of disappointment and remorse. Cursed are those peacemakers of this worldly sort, for they shall be at last known as Satan's own offspring. Peacemaking is not cowardly or mean surrender, any more than it is bluster and bullying.

The peace of indifference particularly char-

acterized the time of Jesus. It was against this that he brought the sword. Many were self-righteous, indifferent to the offers of a greater good, careless and supercilious toward the Messiah.

The world abounds ever in those who are seeking this kind of peace. "It is hard to resist evil," they say; "indeed, it is not worth while; let it alone; matters will come out all right in the end." And so they are indifferent to all manner of wrong and iniquity. They condone the sowing of wild oats; they extenuate peccadilloes and lapses; they wink at social evils, political corruption, and official incompetency. It is easier to leave abuses alone than to resist and try to reform them. "Let well enough alone," is their plea. "Do not be impractical," they urge. "You will stir up needless opposition," they warn. "It has always been this way and always will be," they declare. And so they fashion excuses, relieve themselves of responsibility and settle down to a feeling of personal indifference towards the wrongs of the day, the discords and the strifes among men.

I have seen a mother, whose love for her child no one could doubt, so careless of the child's welfare that his physical and his moral nature were both hourly in danger of irreparable

injury. If he ran into danger, she did not like to forbid him, for "probably he would come out all right," she reasoned. If he disobeyed her, she took no pains to correct him, for "Josie was a good boy and wouldn't do it again," and she did not like to cross him.

As I have seen parents surrender to a child's tears, so I have seen them hopefully, optimistically ignorant of all that the child was doing. "Jennie may run on the streets: I do not like to keep her too close; the poor girl must have some liberties; she will be all right;" so reasons too frequently the fond mother, yielding easily to the peace of indifference; or, "Tommy is out late nights, I know, but I think no harm will come of it; he likes to have his own way, and it might be worse if I should say anything about it." Alas! sometimes this is all a mother can do; but at other times it is the makeshift excuse of a maternal *laissez-faire* principle, seeking the easy peace of careless indifference.

Easy-going indifference sometimes assumes the garb of charity, and secures for itself praise. It is easy to give to a beggar a nickel, when nickels are abundant; but what virtue is there in the gift when the one intention is to be rid of the beggar? "I do not want to be troubled," is the actuating motive. For a housekeeper to furnish the tramp a dinner at her back door

occasions probably the least trouble for either her or the man of the house; but the dinner does not help society in its solution of the problem of vagrancy. It is easy as a policy for a city or town or county or state to say to all vagrants and to all criminals, "You may go free, if you will leave us alone; move on!" In times past it has been comparatively easy for England to rid herself of paupers and convicts by transporting them to Australia and "assisting" them to America; but are such methods right methods of securing peace? They are not the sons of God who say to all iniquity, vice, disorder, and obnoxiousness, "Move on — Out of my sight — Let me alone — Give me peace."

A man with a guilty conscience may relieve his pangs of remorse by plunging into pleasure or by drowning his sorrows in the cup. A sinner may soothe his soul by putting away seriousness. Indeed, by a purely subjective, intellectual process, a man may reason out, wholly by himself, terms of peace between himself and God, without taking God into the account at all.

But true peacemaking is a deeper, more serious task than any of these superficial expedients imply. There really is no peace unless right relations are observed. A quack may deaden a pain, but a genuine physician heals

the complaint by removing the cause. A policeman may order a beggar to move off, but a philanthropist, a real lover of man, seeking the cause of poverty, will try to remedy it at its seat. A pettifogger will twist and turn the law for a special interpretation, but a great lawyer will look deep down for principles, and counsel his client according to the true ends of justice. A perfunctionary teacher may, by severity and sternness, keep order in the schoolroom and "hear lessons," while a loving teacher, a genius at teaching, will study the attainments and possibilities of each pupil, adapting and explaining as each requires, and, inspiring all, will have attention and quietness as a perfectly natural condition of the schoolroom. A foolish, indulgent parent will permit sweetmeats, and allow privileges which are hurtful to the child, while a wise mother or father, in close sympathy with the child, always directs the appetites and desires of the little one, so that after a while, he more than half controls himself, acquiring new wisdom daily.

True peace must rest on right relations. Wendell Phillips, in his large, bold hand, once wrote in my autograph-book, "Peace, if possible; justice at any rate." Were Phillips and Garrison and John Brown peacemakers? They were seeking right relations; they were bent

on securing justice and freedom for all. Were those others peacemakers who urged compromise and compliance, who deplored war and were willing to give up anything rather than resort to arms? Warfare and carnage are terrible woes to a land; but injustice, falseness in the social fabric, and continued wrong relations are worse.

Blessed are those who set relations right; blessed are those who improve conditions; blessed are those who dig down to the foundations of truth and justice and build thereon; for all such build as God builds, act as he acts, and fulfill his purposes; they are worthy to be called the sons of God.

Love of truth is the chief characteristic of a genuine peacemaker. He does not count himself the measuring rod for all about him; he tries to see things as they are. He does not assume that his little brain contains all wisdom; but outside of himself, in man, in things about him, in God above him, are principles and influences to which he must conform; these he must know; he must have knowledge of conditions as they are. Fact and truth above all else he seeks. How else can he introduce right relations?

Peace cannot be founded upon falsehood any more than a secure house can be built upon the

crater of a volcano. Falsehood will not remain still; it seethes, it boils, it bursts forth. A lie will out, for it is not in right relations to any abiding fact; all that rests upon it topples and slips. There is no peace in lies; there is no permanency in error. Truth alone can stand; truth alone is sure.

Blessed are the permanency-makers, for they shall be called like unto God; blessed are they, because they so adjust men and things as to leave their work well done, not needing rectification, being founded upon truth where it may abide. Blessed are those whose lives fit harmoniously into their surroundings, filling gaps, bridging chasms, supplying deficiences, making the life of society about them smooth, firm, more solid, more happy, more contented, adding character to their little world; they, though at length going, or dying, yet abide, for they have builded upon truth; they are peacemakers.

A second characteristic of a genuine peacemaker is gentleness. Gentleness has yet great achievements to win in the world. We scold and bluster, we worry and fret, but in this way do we secure peace? By so doing, do we allay trouble and alleviate distress, or lessen by one iota the discords of the world? God's ways are ways of gentleness. "Thy gentleness hath made me great," sang the Psalmist. A quiet

answer turns away wrath; gentleness soothes and calms disquieted spirits.

Gentleness is efficacious because it implies self-control. No one can be gentle and tender of touch unless the hand be steady, the nerves calm, and all the muscles in complete subjection to the will. No one can be gentle and tender of speech unless the mind be calm, the passions still, the thoughts active and deliberate. Gentleness indicates self-mastery; it is a greater proof of strength than roughness and rudeness, though thoughtless people do not so regard it. Any soul can fly into a passion. It is a stronger soul, however, that checks the passion, subdues anger, and, under whatsoever provocation, continues calm and quiet. They who are gentle keep peace within; then they are able to promote peace without.

Gentleness wins its way; it obtains a hearing as does nothing else. Noise and bluster, passion and rant may monopolize attention for a season; but gentleness succeeds and stays. Blessed, then, are the gentle, for they do good to all about them; holding quiet restraint upon themselves, they call a halt to the wrangling and excitement of turbulent disputants; they pour in the oil of calm reason, they mix the myrrh of considerateness, they bind up wounded hearts with sympathy and love. Blessed are

they who promote gentleness, for they partake of the characteristics of God.

Another characteristic of the genuine peacemakers is the spirit of self-sacrifice. No one produces peace in the community by sitting in his home and simply wishing well to the world. He must go forth and give of himself to the world. Gentleness must not be thought of as passive do-nothing-ness. Love of truth and gentleness should not produce inactivity. The one indicates allegiance to fact; the other indicates a method. But what are fact and method unless employed? Of what avail are drugs on the apothecary's shelves and a prescription wisely penned by the physician, unless the patient has the prescription filled and takes the medicine?

Love of truth and gentleness must be applied; they must combine in self-sacrifice. Wishes alone never make peace; prayers alone cannot produce it. Peacemaking comes from personal effort. "Peace, if possible; justice at any rate:" that is a martyr's battle-cry. That means peace only on the foundation of truth, cost what it may; time, effort, life itself, — all may go into the payment, but peace, peace founded upon truth, must come.

In its treatment of social disorders, industrial strifes, class contentions and political machina-

tions, society has already evinced an earnest devotion for truth in investigating actual conditions and trying to come at the fundamental facts, and has adopted also the method of gentleness through agitation, organization, education, legislation, and arbitration. And yet society has not yet reached the point of sacrificing self; statesmen and politicians, governors and legislators have not yet become social peacemakers to this extent; efforts and sacrifices they leave too largely to others. But altruism, as an active principle of conduct, must be still more completely triumphant over egoism before the perfect reign of peace on earth can be ushered in.

Peacemaking, even in its partial and incomplete form, is, however, a blessed task. It suggests smiles instead of frowns, kindness instead of anger, coöperation instead of opposition, industry instead of warfare. The conditions of peace, rendering men fraternal, allow husbandry, trade, commerce, education, civilization, culture, worship. Peace unites, harmonizes, solidifies the social fabric. Peace gives joy and solace and comfort to the human heart. Peace causes the land to burst forth into happiness and rejoicing. Peace lessens labor, minimizes hardship, assuages pain, mitigates grief. What greater boon is there for man than peace?

Peacemaking is even Godlike. The infinite love is ever seeking peace, the peace of every troubled heart, the cessation of every woe, of every strife, of every conflict, of every pain. To peace God calls ; and to be peacemakers is his wish for us. Thus called, we must obey.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### PERILS OF OMISSION.

THE law of Moses is prohibitive. "Thou shalt not" is its phraseology. Not to do is its fulfillment. Avoid, pass by, leave undone, are the terms of its practical exhortation. According to the Ten Commandments, there can be no sins of omission, for every sin must be omitted. Commission is sin, while omission is virtue. Cold passivity meets all the requirements of the ten negations.

But Christ has set a higher standard. He has placed the law of God wholly on its positive side. His two great commandments are mandatory — commandments properly so-called. "Thou shalt" are the terms of statement: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind;" "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And when he was asked for an explanation of the second commandment, he gave the parable of the good Samaritan, concluding with the positive requirement, "Go thou and do like-

wise." Sometimes he even condensed the two commandments into one, "Follow thou me;" but the bidding is then no less positive and its execution no less obligatory of positive and definite acts.

The teaching of Jesus in all particulars requires aggression into positive righteousness, and not mere recession from iniquity. With him omission is sin, while in commission lies the virtue. To refuse, to pass by, to avoid, to leave undone, to neglect, bring the guilt of condemnation. Indifference and passivity are grievous faults; inaction is sin.

Indeed, we may find this higher law running through all departments of life and being. By neglect no one can obtain saving for the body or the mind. Neglect is fatal for the physical and mental, as well as for the spiritual well-being, whether of a babe, child, or man. In business, in farming, in the arts, and in the professions inaction entails ruin. Through careless indifference comes neither safety nor soundness for homes, schools, or political, social, and religious institutions. The pauper, the tramp, the drunkard, the criminal are not reformed by simple well-wishing. The *laissez-faire* principle, once advocated by over-hopeful optimists, has proved itself inadequate for actual progress toward improvement, and has been abandoned

by economists and sociologists, because it has been discovered in hard experience that effort and struggle, well directed, constant, and vigorous, are the only means of social advancement.

That the kingdom established by Christ, after nineteen centuries, has not gained possession of the whole earth, is owing less to errors and heresies of doctrine into which Christians may have run, than to the ease and idleness in which they too freely have indulged. The man of hardness of heart is not alone he who commits crimes, but more often he who, guilty of no actual misdeeds, yet never exerts himself for positive deeds of love and mercy.

Our Lord gave expression to no exhortations for quietness and ease in his kingdom, "Sit ye still and keep yourselves spotless!" but his appeals were to action, cross-bearing, self-denial, labor. He taught, not they who cry, "Lord, Lord," shall enter into the kingdom, but they that do the will of God. Not they receive his commendation and promotion who keep their talents ever so safely, but they who put them forth in service, and increase them by use.

The sin of omission is so intangible and so subtle that few realize personal guilt, or guard sufficiently against it. It is cloaked under the garb of good resolutions; we disguise it under the excuse of "by and by," or "to-morrow," or

"pretty soon," and so we permit that thief of time to filch away a large share of our positive virtues.

Because robbery is an open, discernible crime of positive act and intent, all honest men shun it; yet the same men who call themselves honest will permit a neighbor to be despoiled through some waste or neglect, which a word or a slight effort might have prevented. The crime of murder is so heinous that all right-minded people shrink from it in horror; and yet some of these same right-minded people will allow a person to reduce his life by degrees, slow or rapid, through some seemingly slight failure to guard and preserve the physical powers. This is not ignorance alone, but is careless neglect. It is a hard-hearted wretch, we think, who will stand on the bank of a river and permit a fellow-being to drift by him over the falls without a single effort to rescue or to attract the help of other rescuers. Yet many of us by passive permission become responsible for loss and destruction that engulf our neighbors.

Sins of commission we see; they can almost be weighed, measured, and tabulated in their due relations and importance; but sins of omission have an extremely tenuous hold upon the attention, and still smaller attachment to memory, if indeed they are noticed at all. There is

little hazard in saying that any person who reviews life soberly for a moment, will take notice of ten things done that ought not to have been done to one thing left undone that ought to have been done, while, in all probability, the person is guilty of fifty or a hundred times as many sins of omission as of commission.

If a public official becomes intoxicated, or appropriates the public funds, his misdemeanor is obvious, can be proved and brings speedy punishment; but, if, instead of overt acts of disqualification, he simply neglects duty and fails to discharge his obligations, the delinquences are seldom observed by his constituents; and when noticed, are far more difficult of proof than overt acts.

Not always does it follow that the student who keeps along with his classes, without failure in recitations, performing all the routine work of his course, is the successful scholar of disciplined mind and intellectual power. The man of broad scholarship must not neglect to think as well as to learn, to weigh as well as to memorize, to read good literature as well as to study the assigned lessons. The ten commandments of an educational course may lie in the marking system, with its spurs and incentives of class rank and teachers' reports; but the new dispensation of education, the gospel of

learning and wisdom, by which the student works out his own intellectual salvation, lies in personal zest, personal application, a personal commitment to knowledge for the sake of what knowledge may do with and for its disciples. If a young man in college strives simply for his diploma, he has his reward, — a diploma; but if he faithfully avails himself of all the opportunities for true culture which the course affords, following for the sake of knowledge some of the by-paths of truth, which the class as a whole is not required to enter, verily he also will have his reward, — culture and power.

A business man does not need to push his customers from the store in order to lose their trade; if he but neglect them and their interests, he will not be troubled with their presence again. The errand boy need not break, destroy, and steal, in order to render himself unfit for promotion; if he simply leaves his regular tasks unperformed, his services can be dispensed with at night. The cook to prove her worthlessness need not throw the baking out-of-doors, but simply let it burn in the oven. The gardener may destroy his plants quite as effectually by letting the weeds choke them as by pulling them out of the ground. A seaman may commit suicide by simply allowing his vessel to drift.

The sins of omission may be accounted for. Sometimes they spring from ignorance, an ignorance of circumstances, of consequences, or of the divine will. The civil law makes no allowance for violations of this nature, requiring every man to inform himself of the statutes. The great Lawgiver above requires knowledge, yet deals leniently with his subjects, holding them responsible only for their talents and judging them only according to their light. Of that man to whom much has been committed, of him, and of him only, shall much be required. The heathen who have never heard the terms of salvation may yet find acceptance with God in proportion as they have not neglected that which they have known. Infinite justice will not require at our hands sheaves which our hands are incapable of gathering. Failure to perform the impossible cannot be reckoned as sin, and the totally unknown is, to a moral being, the impossible.

Where, then, there is ignorance there may be excuse. But if the ignorance be one of willfulness and obstinate perversity, then the sin of omission returns to the cause of the ignorance, and guilt remains. An innocent lack of knowledge, however, we may well believe, the Master always condones. And how could it be otherwise? Who then could be exempt from

his condemnation? For who knows all? Who has entered into a full conception of all that is involved in the commission of a single, simple deed or of the entertainment of a single thought? It would require infinite wisdom to understand the significance of even one hour of life lived by a very humble man. None can know all the moral and spiritual opportunities and influences in the midst of which they live. Their innocent ignorance must be the extenuation of their failures in a thousand directions to avail themselves of the grace abounding in human circumstances.

Another cause of sins of omission may be found in personal indifference toward opportunities and possibilities. This differs from ignorance, as it is less mental in its nature than emotional. The indifferent man "does not care;" he has no liking one way or the other; "it is all the same" to him. Such a man is lukewarm, — neither hot nor cold, — to be spued out of the mouth.

The probation of this world does not admit of neutrality. Issues are clear; lines are drawn; sides must be taken. This is not a world of monotonous levels, nor of confused and obscure colorings, nor of continuous, unvarying force. The earth itself is composed of hill and valley, of light and shade, and is permeated with forces

of great and small impulsions. By it, likes and dislikes are aroused and varied discriminations occasioned. The very tutelage of nature destroys indifference and *ennui* in her subjects.

From the beginning of his instructions to man, God has taught the necessity of choosing and loving something, some one. A man cannot remain indifferent in the kingdom of heaven. He must care; he must prefer righteousness; he must seek the kingdom and its interests; he must love God, and hate iniquity.

There is a large class of men and women today, outside the pale of the Christian church, who at least seem — if they are not really so — indifferent to the claims of religion, and they constitute a difficult class for the church of Christ to reach. Though they may not be a desirable class for the church to incorporate within her own membership, for, if once within it, they will still retain the accumulated disposition of indifference and neglect, yet for their own sakes they must be sought; they must be aroused to something positive in life, to positive holiness, righteousness, and love.

Indifference has no excuse, and is without extenuation.

But yet another cause of the sins of omission lies in sheer inaction. This differs from ignorance and indifference, inasmuch as it is neither

mental nor emotional in its nature, but rather volitional. A man, knowing what he ought to do, and quite likely preferring that which duty prompts, yet does not do it. Perhaps he simply postpones action. He may not intentionally set his will against God's will in the matter, but he does not place his will in harmony with the divine will. He may try to occupy for the time-being a position of neutrality. But the teaching of Christ makes it quite plain that volitional omission is volitional insubordination. Not to obey is to disobey.

Shall, then, a man who knows the inexorable laws and the inevitable consequences of neglect in farming, in trade, in learning, and in culture, — shall he expect immunity, if he neglect his soul's welfare and his spiritual obligations? Shall a man be less wise in his religion than in his business, his pleasures, or his personal and social improvements? If attention and action are the price of success in all other departments of life and being, shall they not also be recognized as the price of salvation in the spiritual domain?

The divine love has in no manner neglected us. Can we escape a righteous condemnation, if we neglect the overtures of grace, the declarations of the divine will, and the opportunities of fellowship with Christ?

## CHAPTER XIV.

### WANT, THE PROPHECY OF SUPPLY.

THE measure of individual possibility is expressed in the beatitude, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

A little definition will aid in disclosing the significance of this measure. To hunger and thirst are strong expressions for desire, common in all languages. The lexicon, in students' hands, defines the Greek word for hunger, in its metaphorical use, "to crave ardently, to seek with eager desire," and says of the word for thirst, "figuratively, those are said to thirst who painfully feel their want of, and eagerly long for, those things by which the soul is refreshed, supported, strengthened." The Greek original of the word rendered "shall be filled" occurs frequently in the New Testament, signifying to feed, to satisfy with food; first used of feeding animals, and later of feeding men.

This beatitude might, therefore, be paraphrased, Blessed are those who eagerly long

for righteousness, and earnestly strive to be righteous: for they shall have righteousness fed to them as food, and their longings shall be met. But, since righteousness here must not be thought of as something abstract, the paraphrase might be amplified to the form, Blessed are they who eagerly long for personal goodness, who earnestly strive to be personally good: for they shall be fed with the elements which make personal goodness, and shall find their ideals constantly approaching realization.

Worldly wisdom expresses sententiously the same thought, "Where there is a will, there is a way;" and the wise seer of the Old Testament Scriptures has written, "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Longings become purposes; aspirations are converted into policies and plans; thinking transmutes itself into conduct; ideals make character.

We have already seen that there is very little suddenness in this world. Changes are usually by growth, by slight gradations, by almost imperceptible modifications. And this is as true in relation to changes which affect human souls as in the developments taking place in the physical universe.

It is obvious to us that the supposed exemplary bank official, who startles the community by enormous peculations, has not all at once

made his stealings, but long since began to think wrongly in regard to the wealth committed to his trust; and gradually the thought grew to a purpose, and at last the purpose became an act. The man of reputed probity and purity has not all at once become profligate and vicious, when a public disclosure reveals a foul and putrid life, but has long allowed viciousness to paint the pictures of his mind, until, delighting in the pictures, he has desired the vice, and given himself to its embrace. No blasphemer and scoffer has lost respect for God and religion in a day or a night, but has reached his negations and their accompanying mental obtuseness and hardness of heart by inches.

Character is a growth. It creeps upon us as the twilight becomes darkness and as the dawn increases to day. Virtue is not a flash, a flare, a glare, or a sudden ecstasy. Goodness springs not up as mushrooms. Righteousness represents the slow accretions of unfolding character; it is the evolution of spiritual manhood from the inherent, latent powers and possibilities of the soul.

In many seeds the embryo reveals its axis, plumule, and leaves, indicative of what the plant shall be, before the plant has begun to grow. At some stages of development from

the egg, the unaided eye can behold what the microscope long since discerned, a clear prophecy of the life to be, its kind, its form, and perchance its functions. So in the aspirations of a human soul, in its longings and desires, is a prophecy of what that soul, developing in character, shall be.

The ideals are the embryo of the man. To-morrow lies wrapped within to-day. What one hungers and thirsts after, that shall he have; what one wills to be that shall he become. The constituent, undeveloped elements of both heaven and hell are infolded in the human breast. Direction lies in ambition, and destiny is determined by choice.

We must never look upon conversion as a completed act. It is merely a beginning. In it two coöperating agencies combine and continue their activities: the human will, supplying proper conditions by its determination of spiritual direction and pliancy, and the divine power, imparting through the truth new principles and new cogency to the soul. But conversion must not satisfy. A converted soul that is satisfied with conversion will soon be a dead soul. To be born and not to grow is to be a monstrosity.

Christ's assurance of satisfaction to them that hunger and thirst after righteousness

does not refer to the mere joy of entering upon a Christian life but to the fuller joy of continued development in the Christian life. He speaks of constant aspirations for increased righteousness, persistent longings for more holiness, and never-ceasing incentives to progress, improvement, and enlarged conceptions of the possibilities of acquaintance with divine truth.

To be satisfied is to stagnate and become unwholesome; to be satisfied is to petrify and become a monument sacred to the memory of an experience; to be satisfied is to lay down the historian's pen and close the volume; to be satisfied is to terminate one's spiritual biography. No, no. Blessed are they who are not satisfied, who long for more, for they shall behold their ideals far in advance, and shall find both joy and inspiration in pursuit.

No other religion sets so high a standard for its adherents as Christianity: "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Other religions exhort, "appease God;" but to appease and pacify Deity is not so lofty an aim, by an almost measureless distance, as to become like God in holiness. Buddhism holds forth the ideal of final absorption into divinity, losing personal identity; but to be merged in the infinite is by no means so exalted and ennobling an aim as,

while distinct from God, to take on by degrees, albeit slowly, some of the holy characteristics of God.

Christianity sets up the unattainable as its goal, "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," and urges man to attain thereto. The very impossibility of attainment and, therefore, of immediate and complete satisfaction, is one proof of the perennial freshness of the religion of Jesus Christ. When the world has grown old, the ideal will still be attractive and potent, will still be in advance. When man has run his course, the goal, still far in the distance, will attract him. When humanity has reached out to its farthest stretch, it will still have spheres of attraction and allurement on beyond it. Even eternity cannot exhaust the object of pursuit or make the aim and ideal of the Christian cheap and mean. Could anything short of this be adequate for an ultimate religion? Could anything else be worthy the name of a "divine" religion? Could one know that the religion was not from man unless it held out to man more than man ever was capable of?

Blessed indeed, then, are they who hunger and thirst. Let them become ever so righteous, yet more remains to long for. Let them climb and mount, they may climb and mount

still higher. Let them attain all the excellences of earth and there will yet remain for them unappropriated goodness; aye, on into eternity they may go, ever advancing, ever attaining, ever hungering and thirsting, ever being filled.

To hunger and thirst is the mark of life and growth. He who is learning, desiring ever to know, is the scholar, not he who knows. He is a fossil who thinks he knows enough, and does not learn. Young men who go forth from college satisfied with their diplomas will end where they begin; they are already antiquated. Life is before; it is not past. The small successes already achieved should be an inspiration. Having contributed some knowledge, some character, some power, past life should have also contributed a great hungering and thirsting after more knowledge, more character, more power, more life, else the past has been well nigh void and vain. That is a good institution of learning which sends forth its students equipped with a method and an ambition for scholarly attainments and an intellectual life, whether possessing at the time of graduation much of knowledge or not; and that is a good student, not who knows a great deal, but who is conscious that he knows little, and wills to know more.

Possibility is better than pride of possession;

opportunity is worth even more than achievement. Achievement may be a closed door; one may be on the inside, yet perhaps a prisoner, shut up in the past. If there be no more opportunities, dismal indeed is the prison-house! Opportunity throws wide a door, through which one may pass, not into a *cul de sac*, a blind alley, but into spacious halls, opening wide into an alluring vista of possibilities.

He who would preserve his life must ever enter the open doors, and never abide. His rest must consist in not resting. Weariness and *ennui* are the portion of those who have settled into attainment and obtain nothing more. They are caged and captive; the past repeats itself with wearying, painful monotony. To them life is walled up, blank and drear. Their to-day was yesterday, and their to-morrow will be to-day, without surcease.

Oh, woe unto them who have lost ambition and strive no longer to achieve; woe unto him who has lost his appetite, either physical or mental; woe to him to whom all things have become flat and insipid; woe indeed to all who no longer hunger and thirst after knowledge in the intellectual sphere, or after righteousness in the spiritual sphere, for they are indeed dead!

Such a feeling of woe for those who do not

hunger and thirst, who do not entertain the spirit of progress, lies behind the thought of Carlyle when, in his "Life of Frederick the Great" he speaks of excessive conservatism: "It is very wrong to keep enchanted wiggeries sitting in this world, as if they were things still alive. By a species of 'conservatism,' which gets praise in our time, but which is only slothful cowardice, base indifference to truth and hatred to trouble in comparison with lies that sit quiet, men now extensively practice this method of procedure, little dreaming how bad and fatal it at all times is. When the brains are out things really ought to die, — no matter what lovely things they were and still affect to be, the brains being out, they actually ought in all cases to die, and with their best speed get buried. Men had noses at one time; and smelt the horror of a deceased reality fallen putrid, of a once dear veracity become mendacious, phantasmal; but they have to an immense degree lost that organ since, and are now living comfortably cheek-by-jowl with lies. Lies of that sad 'conservative' kind, and indeed of all kinds whatsoever: for that kind is a general mother; and *breeds*, with a fecundity that is appalling, did you heed it much." That is a Carlylean lament over a lack of hungering and thirsting after new truth and after enlarged righteousness,

He who does not long for more and for better is content with sham, and then weds himself, in the stupidity of his slothfulness, to lies. All our progress in the arts and sciences, in travel and discovery, in invention and knowledge is due to hungering and thirsting. This Western Continent was discovered because a man, though hindered, thwarted, yet determined, seeking, was not baffled. A quiet observer in a dim cathedral, though at length suppressed and persecuted, yet, nothing daunted, persevered: the swinging lamp emboldened him to declare of the earth, it "does move." Astronomy is a science because men have hungered to know the heavens and their mysteries. Electricity bends its shoulder to the service of man because man has hungered and thirsted after knowledge of the lightning's nature and method. The intense longing now felt in the observatories, laboratories, and workshops of thousands of persistent seekers prophesies that more knowledge, in directions yet unknown, will benefit mankind in our day. Man has longed to fly; the prophecy of his flying is written large on the attempts, and more clearly on the desires of man.

And yet, while the standard of Christianity may be termed inaccessible, nevertheless attainment in Christian longing and aspiration is

more certain than in any other domain. In the physical, industrial, social, political worlds, the promise of satisfaction holds good only under fixed conditions.

It used to be said that every American boy might aspire to the presidency of the United States. Yet among seventy millions of people not more than fifteen individuals living at any one time can, by any possibility of contingencies, ever attain to the honors of a four years' residence in the White House. The others may hunger and thirst, yet never be more than town clerk or ward politican. It used to be true that a farmer could with ease earn a competency, pay for his farm, and educate liberally his boys and girls at the academy and college; but the conditions of landholdings in the West, with large acreage, fertile soil, cultivation by machinery and cheap transportation, have rendered the chances much more against the farmer and raised barriers over which he has no control. Not all who hunger and thirst for the old homestead on the hillside can to-day lift its incumbrance of mortgage.

It used to be true that the mechanic could reasonably look forward to becoming a master in his trade, an owner, and participator in large enterprises; but now he is too often a mere part of a machine, acquainted with but a small

portion of his trade, perhaps trained only to the holding of two pieces of leather so that a machine may complete the labor of his hands. However much he may hunger and thirst for advancement and promotion, yet he knows only one machine and its possibilities; his world has become narrowed down to the circumference of that one piece of mechanism! It used to be true that a young man in a store might reasonably expect, by industry and frugality through the patience of years, to become proprietor; but now he "clerks it" at the ribbon counter; he knows nothing but ribbons; he may hunger and thirst after satins or woolens, after bookkeeping or purchasing; but he is filled with ribbons!

The industrial world surely faces a hard bondage to-day in too many of our great cities and villages and in too many of our modern factories and shops. Labor agitations have this not unreasonable complaint behind them. The unrest, the discontent, and all the manifold disturbances caused by strikes, lockouts, boycotting, rioting, and by tramps are due in no small degree to the fact that there is a social, an industrial hungering and thirsting, keen and insistent, that has no hope of being appeased, no promise of assuagement. The great social problem today is, how to meet these longings, most of

which are legitimate. To hunger and thirst without the promise is to face despair.

But in righteousness there are no arbitrary limitations. In religion a man stands alone, unfettered by his fellows, unrestrained by social hindrances, free from the bondage of monopolies, "trusts," and "corners." In religion there are no favors; God is no respecter of persons. So far as the individual is concerned, the whole religious world consists of but two, God and himself. While in labor a man becomes a part of his machine, and in agriculture and trade he is a part of a great social organization, a part of a system, yet in matters that pertain to the spiritual life he appears as a sovereign person before a sovereign personal God.

In the approach to God there exist no insurmountable limitations. Heredity may yield tendencies and biases, but heredity is no final arbiter of destiny; the circumstances of one's life may check and hinder, but they cannot abrogate the scope of human freedom. God is accessible to all; heaven is at no time closed to any; treasures where moth and rust do not corrupt may be made as abundant as one wills; in spiritual pursuits the future is free; no impossibility confronts him whose aim is goodness; righteousness never fails.

Ideals make the spiritual man. In spiritual

things their domination extends more completely than in any other department of being. Aims prophesy of the future; ambition is a forecast of spiritual attainments.

These teachings of the Master are pregnant with meaning. They indicate that the new birth is not like the mythical origin of Minerva, full grown from the head of Jove, but a birth unto spiritual infancy and growth; that, indeed, in Christianity neither the positive nor the superlative degree can be applied to man, but the comparative only, for in order to be holy, he must be ever becoming more holy; in order to be good, must ever be growing better; in order to stand, must ever be advancing; and to complete the suggestions on this point, it is apparent that sanctification must be simply healthful, normal growth in grace.

The suggestions of these teachings of the Master confirm our thought that the religion which he has revealed must be the final and absolute religion, for it, of all religions, offers the loftiest, most noble standard, and is therefore fit to abide as the highest type revealed to man; for Christianity has promise of ever giving satisfaction, of never growing old, never becoming antiquated, never proving inadequate, — even through the limitless æons of eternity, and unto the saint purest grown, as it has

within it the potency of development unto the perfect ideal, God.

The Master's language does not necessarily disparage conservatism; for, there is a legitimate conservatism, the conservatism of holding fast that which is good; but the Master sets his approval upon progressiveness, upon ambition for improvement, upon a wholesome discontent with the past and the present for the sake of gaining a new and a better future. The restless activity and intense self-projection into the future of the Apostle Paul accords with this principle: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forth unto those that are before, I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

The promise of satisfaction on the lips of the Master affords the inestimable consolation, in the midst of all social, political, and industrial disappointments and distresses, of success to the seeker, rest for the weary, food and refreshment for the hungry, grace for the sinful. It speaks of peace after conflict, of home after wanderings, of joy to take the place of pain and sorrow, of heaven when earth is passed.

If a man hunger and thirst after righteousness, what cheer and assurance he may have!

Let him look forward, outward, onward, upward : he shall be filled. Though hungering and thirsting, though struggling and toiling, — yea, while hungering and thirsting, while struggling and toiling, — nay, better yet, *because* of his intense longings and *because* of his strong efforts, the prophecy of his soul's desires shall be met, he shall be fed, he shall be filled, he shall be satisfied.

## CHAPTER XV.

### PROGRESSIVE REVELATION.

REVELATION is always limited by the capacity of the recipient. A pint cup can hold no more than a pint even if supplied from a million-gallon reservoir. Belief is one synonym for spiritual capacity; it is the synonym for receptivity up to the limit of ability. But even ready belief cannot receive all things, because ability is wanting.

This lack of ability on the part of the disciples and contemporaries of Jesus brings to the surface of the New Testament narrative some of the tenderest strains of pathos the world knows. Because of unbelief Jesus was obliged to withhold himself; having no one who could fully sympathize with him, he had none upon whom he could lean for solace and support, but was obliged to bear his burdens isolated from intimate human fellowship; though he came with an infinite revelation, yet he could impart but the rudiments, as none were then prepared to receive the whole. He himself said, just be-

fore leaving his disciples, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

Human incapacity has occasioned divine reticence; the limitations of the flesh put fetters even upon the spirit. In the midst of his disciples stood Jesus, laden, full, infinite with truth, ready to impart; and before him were the disciples, believing, eager to receive, but unable: "ye cannot bear them now."

It is plain that there can be no complete and perfect revelation until the complete and perfect man appears. Finality comes not now, but in the future. As man increases in capacity, to him truth may come more freely, more abundantly; and, therefore, because he enlarges, revelation to him may be said to be progressive.

This truth can be illustrated from the lives of the apostles. While Jesus was with them, they supposed his reign to be temporal and him to be an earthly king. In his kingdom they strove for place and greatness. When he spoke of suffering and death, they expostulated, "Be it far from thee, Lord." Even immediately before the ascension, after the intimacy of their three years' service with him, having heard his words, having seen his works and having bathed in his spirit, they yet inquired, "Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" But after Pentecost, after an

enlargement of spiritual vision which made the recognition of new truth possible, they began to see and proclaim the coming of a spiritual kingdom.

The prophet Joel, at least four centuries before Christ, had said, "and it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered," or saved. But none of the Jews understood these words to mean more than that whatever Jew would call upon God would find favor. Peter, though using the language on the day of Pentecost, had no broader conception of its significance than any Jew would have, and, even after a special experience on the housetop, failed to banish the old notion from his mind. Paul, with a wider training, possessed a broader capacity to discern that in this old prophetic utterance was an expression of divine mercy and purpose toward the Gentile as well as the Jew.

Although it is declared in the books of Deuteronomy, Second Chronicles and Job that God is no respecter of persons, yet every Jew supposed that amongst Jews alone this divine impartiality prevailed. The disciples of Jesus entertained the same thought, even though Jesus by his example had shown favor of a wider scope to the Syro-phenician woman, to the Samaritan woman, and to them of Gadara

and Tyre and Sidon, and even though he had by explicit commandment instructed them to preach the Gospel to every creature. But the special vision to Peter, when he was sent to Cornelius, gave the first clear glimpse of the broader outlook.

The great commission, spoken by Jesus before his ascension, to make disciples of all the nations, none of the apostles understood, or complied with, until, nearly fifteen years later, the scope of the divine intent dawned upon the minds of the church at Antioch, and Paul and Barnabas were sent out on the first missionary tour.

Indeed, contrary to a notion prevalent among many Christians, we must acknowledge that those primitive days in the church are not the most perfect examples of the Master's intent for his disciples and the application of his truth. The apostles were so limited in their appreciation of the character of the Messiah and the Kingdom which he was to establish, that their examples and their utterances must be tested by the later and larger revelation that came as Christian experience enlarged the capacity to discern.

In his first Epistle to the Thessalonians Paul wrote of Christ's return to earth as so imminent that those who were then living should

see him and "be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air;" but within a few months, when penning the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul had grown to the recognition of the fact that Christ was not to appear immediately, but "the man of sin" must first come, and many preliminary events intervene.

The choosing by lot of Matthias to take the place of Judas, while certainly "apostolic," need commend to us to-day neither the use of chance and divination in determining important issues, nor the propriety of preserving a sacred apostolic college and a certain form of ecclesiastical government.

Nor can the early communism of the church be cited as an infallible pattern for us to follow to-day. That those Christians sold all their goods and had all things common, is not sufficient reason why we should do the same. They inaugurated a practice which Christ had not commanded, and which they themselves ere long abandoned. If the teaching of Jesus does contain the germ of this mode of social reformation, we must follow our best enlightenment in developing that germ; but we are upon insecure ground for finding our present-day duties merely in apostolic precedent. Were we to adhere to that precedent consistently and persistently,

we should take occasion to follow Jesus, when in danger, "afar off," and to deny him, as Peter did, and, when imperiled ourselves, to seek our own safety, without regard to the Master's need, as did all the apostles excepting John at the hour of crucifixion. If Tolstoi is right in advocating for modern society such fraternity as the pentecostal church practiced, it must be proven to us in the light of modern conditions, with the modern conscience revolving the eternal truth enunciated by Christ.

It is obvious that revelation to man may increase along three lines of development.

The first is through diffusion of knowledge in history, geography, customs, language, and literature. I do not say increase of knowledge. To know what others of a past time or remote country know, may signify an increase of knowledge to us, but it is no real increase to the sum total of human knowledge; it is mere diffusion in time and space. Indeed, there can be no increase of knowledge in history and geography, in customs, past or present, and languages and literatures, past or present; in these directions diffusion of knowledge alone is possible. To receive the facts of Roman history or of Palestinian geography involves simply a transmission of knowledge to us.

Now, by diffusion of knowledge, men advance

in capacity to appreciate truth. This is readily assented to, when knowledge of Biblical scenes and events is involved. We may take a tangible instance.

In the Fourth Gospel occurs a clause which at first sight seems insignificant in meaning, — "And he must needs go through Samaria," — but yields to us a depth of insight into the Master's spirit and character when we recall the position of Samaria, between Judea and Galilee, and learn from Josephus, almost contemporary with Jesus, that many Jews, because of a long-cherished and intense hatred of the Samaritans, would not go through Samaritan territory, but preferred to pass over the Jordan River, and, by a circuitous route through Perea, make the journey around Samaria. When thus understood, these few words give an example of the Master's moral courage and freedom from human prejudices and hatreds. The little phrase by diffusion of knowledge becomes luminous with meaning.

Another instance may be found in the life of Paul. When in Phrygia and Galatia, on his second missionary journey, Paul desired to go southwest into the province of Asia, and, being hindered by the Spirit, desired then to travel northward into Bithynia, but, again prevented by the Spirit, was obliged to remain in Galatia

for a time, after which he passed by Mysia down to Troas and thence into Europe. Such is the simple narrative of the sixteenth chapter of Acts. But new significance attaches to this narrative when we discover in Paul's letter to the Galatians that the apostle preached the Gospel to them the first time "because of an infirmity of the flesh." Sickness seems to have been the manner in which the will of the Spirit was manifested in forbidding Paul to travel either to the southwest or to the north; and while sick in an unintended tarrying-place, yet the apostle does not mope and waste his time in idle regrets at the miscarriage of his plans, but counts it rather an opportunity to preach the Gospel to the people of Galatia, and he so preaches that "churches" are formed, and converts are rendered willing to pluck out their eyes for him.

And so, by a diffused knowledge of the circumstances involved in the brief Biblical narrative, we see more clearly the revelation of Christian character.

Biblical criticism endeavors to reconstruct the actual conditions and facts attending the original composition of our sacred books: when they were written, how they were written, and all the circumstances of their origin, preservation, and purpose. From such an attempt, if honestly

executed, we have nothing to fear, but everything to gain. If literary criticism can show, and show as facts and not as conjectures, that the book of Isaiah was written by two men at widely separated periods of time, that the book of Daniel was penned several hundreds of years after the date usually assigned to it, that the Pentateuch is a compilation from several earlier sources, then, though we adjust our present views of the Bible, we shall be in no sense losers, but shall better know what the Bible really is, and shall thus come nearer to the truth. As we know better what Moses knew, or did not know, we shall be better able to "bear" the revelation which God has made to us through him.

Somewhat more than half a century ago new theories concerning the New Testament were confidently promulgated by certain critics. The religious world was at first greatly disturbed; but the calm and critical investigations which those theories evoked have but firmly and incontestibly established the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament writings as a whole.

Criticism simply seeks to reproduce the past that we may understand past processes, and thus rightly estimate present possessions inherited from the past. Modern criticism may at times

be overzealous and rash; she is but a youthful maiden still. Her mission, however, is a right mission, and her final conclusions, when tested, turned, and tried, we need not fear, but may welcome. She diffuses knowledge that we may the more clearly discern truth. By our comprehending better that which is distant in time and space we the better understand the present; indeed, our capacity to see spiritual forces and apprehend spiritual truth becomes enlarged. Knowledge about the Bible, the peoples of the Bible, and the times of and before the Bible, but increases our ability to receive the revelation already given.

The second line along which revelation may progress is through an actual enlargement of human knowledge, an absolute increase of the sum total of knowledge possessed in the world, and not a mere diffusion of knowledge. Most of the sciences and many of the inventions of to-day give us knowledge absolutely new to man, hitherto possessed by none.

Archbishop Usher, who lived two centuries ago, by computing the reigns of kings, the ages of the patriarchs, and the generations of men in the Old Testament narration, set the creation of the world four thousand and four years before Christ, about six thousand years ago. But to-day we can compute better than could

Usher. God has set more dials on creation's clock than the periods of time indicated in the books of Kings and Chronicles.

Niagara Falls, wearing away, inch by inch, its rocky face, slowly receding from Lake Ontario toward Lake Erie, is one indicator read to-day. The deposits of great rivers, at their mouths, the action of the tides upon the coast lines of continents, the heat of the earth's crust with its rate of cooling, magnetic conditions and chemical changes within the earth's fissures and mines, — all these physical aspects of the earth becoming known to-day, prepare for a truer understanding of creation's time and creation's processes than Archbishop Usher in his day could possibly have.

The story of the rocks, where God has written a revelation through his immutable laws, as vast strata have cooled from a molten state, have been overturned by their own contraction, have been wrought upon by sun and wind and water, have been shattered by the lightning and the earthquake, — this tale, God-given, known already in part through modern science, and to be still better known when science has delved yet more deeply into physical mysteries, this adds to human capacity to receive the divine revelation. We cannot yet declare whether the earth is twenty million or one hundred million,

or many thousands of millions of years old — we may know by and by; but already, seeing a greater age than six thousand years, we discern more clearly the immensity of infinite might working in time.

Charles Darwin started new lines of thought in every department of learning, and revolutionized many of the sciences. While himself ignoring supernatural force and law (and deploring, too, before his death, what he had lost thereby), Darwin has given to scientists, philosophers, and theologians basic conceptions concerning the manner of the divine procedure in the universe that have enlarged immensely the Christian's perception of the divine presence and wisdom. In consequence of the lines of thought and investigation started by the evolutionists, God is no longer viewed as a Creator who, far above the earth, reaches down occasionally to touch and shape it here and there, creating now this species and then that, but passing his existence amid the glories of a distant splendor; nor yet is he conceived of as one who, having made the earth and endowed it with forces and laws, withdraws from it and leaves it to run its course uncared for by divine supervision, untouched by divine providence; but he is regarded as now on earth, throughout the universe, personally present in all forces

and powers and laws, himself the present preserver, energizer, and supervisor of man, mind, and matter in all forms. He is not far off, but near, holding all things in his hand, and ever revealing anew his wisdom, gentleness and love, in vegetation, in animal life, in all natural beauty, and in all forces of nature.

We are learning constantly new facts concerning nature, and these enable us the better to understand nature's God, and so the revelation of him increases. As astrology has passed away, with its superstitions and mad perversions, astronomy has come to take its place and to dignify our minds with a calmer, clearer vision of the divine omniscience and omnipotence. Great laws and grand possibilities confront us in the mysterious depths of limitless space.

In France, it is reported, a fund has been intrusted to the National Academy as a prize to be given to the first person who within the next twenty years succeeds in establishing communications between the earth and some heavenly body. What a suggestion is this! And it is not the idle fancy of some unbalanced mind; thitherward have many of the most conservative conclusions of astronomical science pointed for a long time. But what a suggestion! Perhaps we shall soon, through some long-distance telephone of the universe, be talking

with a race of beings, who, in *their* earth, are just in the primitive age, and are living still in their Garden of Eden, sinless and undefiled. Perhaps in other planets we shall converse with races who have had their probationary period, through ages exceeding any of which we have yet dreamed on this mundane sphere, and who can tell us, out of an experience far in advance of ours, how the Gospel of salvation works righteousness on and on, until sin in the race is eliminated. Perhaps we shall even find that heaven has more definite locations in space than now we can conceive of, that the good, by a kind of transmigration of soul, — at least, a transmigration from planet to planet, — live on in other worlds to work and do, to help and rejoice, to learn and know. Perhaps the redeemed soul must enlarge and develop so gradually that it must have the experience of other worlds until, having seen, through all of God's great universe in all of his great systems of suns, all of his vast works, and all of his loving providences, it shall at length be able to behold God himself, able then to bear the sight and have personal knowledge of the Infinite.

We live now in mystery. We do not know all. We but feel the edges of an unbroken ignorance stretching out before us in every direction toward infinity.

> " . . . fain to learn we lean into the dark,
> And grope to feel the floor of the abyss,
> Or find the secret boundary lines which mark
> Where soul and matter kiss."

But we shall know more. Every day we advance a little. Electricity, magnetism, hypnotism, telepathy, — are but mere words as yet, even to the keenest, strictest scientific nomenclature. Have we a sixth sense, undeveloped, yet now perchance pushing forth its slightest differentiation? Are we yet to talk without words and without signs — to read thought in the process of thinking — to transmit thought without a medium? Of telepathy Professor Drummond wrote, "However little we know of it, however remote we are from it, whether it ever be realized or not, telepathy is theoretically the next stage in the evolution of language."

Shall we, perhaps, find a seventh sense — and, perhaps, an eighth? Are we to be capable, as a race, sometime, of knowing some truth, of beholding attributes of God, now hidden, now unknown, at a time when these fleshly walls, through which we peep as through tiny cracks, shall be transparent, and matter shall be read as the mere index of mind?

These possibilities almost appall one! And they are possibilities. They are not mere vapid imaginings. They are before us, in the line of

definite tendencies. Their shadows have been seen; their prophecies, though in whispers and confused, have yet been heard. We shall grow; we shall progress; and, as we know self better and all things about us, we shall discern more of the Infinite Being and more of the revelation which he makes of himself, and of his purposes to man. We shall then be better able to "bear" what he has to say to us.

In these two ways of increasing capacity we are all concerned. Even the humblest human being aids in some way in diffusing knowledge and receives in some measure the knowledge diffused. Even the humblest of us, also, though perhaps not adding to the absolute increase of the world's wisdom, yet shares, to some extent, in that wisdom. What we, as a race, advance in, we, as individuals, have a part of.

But there is yet a third way in which revelation may progress, and that is by an acquirement of spiritual capacity within an individual himself. For this no one is dependent upon tidings brought by telegraph, or mails, or the printing press; nor upon discoveries and inventions; nor upon the genius, experiments, investigations, and labors of others. We work out this kind of increase by ourselves, each alone.

For spiritual discernment we must cultivate

spiritual powers. But the methods and processes of cultivation are manifold.

Personal virtues must be developed first. There is wisdom, far beyond first thought, in those words of Jesus, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The common virtues which society makes prerequisite to her approval are not sufficient, — honesty, veracity, chastity, and general respectability, — but those deeper, broader, nobler virtues of kindness, patience, gentleness, compassion, charity, forbearance, long-suffering, meekness, humility, teachableness, love. Such virtues as these expand the soul. The good see goodness; the true have an affinity for truth. It is what a man is that determines his vision. The same message that Paul preached was a savor of life unto life to some, but a savor of death unto death to others. It was only the servant who buried his one talent that said, "I knew thee that thou art an hard man." Those other servants who had cultivated their gifts, had a kinder, truer conception of their Master, and were admitted into responsibility and rejoicing with him.

The individual heart should ever seek to know God directly. God is a spirit; let the mind think of him thus. He is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, merciful, loving; we must think of him thus. He knows the recesses of

every heart ; he is in every home, in every shop, on the street, — with us in all our goings and comings. At night we rest in his keeping ; in the morning we wake and walk in his care. All that is, is of him, — the sunshine, the storm, winter, summer, cold, heat, — all things are of God. He is not in heaven, afar off ; he is here, amongst men. In this manner should we think of him habitually and seek to know him.

And no less intimately should the individual heart seek to know its Lord and Master, Jesus. A study of his life as it was lived upon the earth in that brief span of fleshly tabernacling constitutes the first preliminary. A patient, devout study alone will disclose the perfection and loveliness of that life. And then must one realize that he is risen ; he is a living Saviour ; he is not dead ; Palestine cannot alone claim his presence. One must dwell in thought upon his love and grace and compassion, must seek to imitate his example, must take him to mind and heart by thought and prayer and endeavor. All who so do find his word true, they know the teaching, — that is, an enlarged understanding of revelation dawns upon them.

Into communion and fellowship with the Holy Spirit must the soul also enter. The Holy Spirit, promised by Christ, is not an "it," but a person. He leads into all truth, calling truth

to remembrance; he cheers, comforts, inspires. "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" Have we first realized that he was and is? Have we been ready to welcome him? Have we sought to know him as scripture reveals him? Have we listened, and hearkened, and heeded spiritual influences, from both within and without? The dispensation of the Spirit is a dispensation of revelation.

For growth and development in the inner nature men must find companionship and joys in the fellowship of the spiritually minded. The growth of unbelief is often subtle. A man who was once an ardent and active Christian, with a strong social nature, did nothing worse at first than to yield himself to frivolous pleasures at the very time when spiritual activities claimed his attention. He meant nothing worse than to go with jolly companions when more serious occupations demanded his presence and help. In that man a spiritual degeneracy set in. He lost spiritual vitality as he ceased spiritual activity, and gradually his spiritual discernment became dull, until now he even thinks he can see no God. Pure and noble associations keep the mind open to purity and nobility. It was when the disciples were of "one accord" in that upper room in Jerusalem that pentecostal power and revelation came. Truth finds warmth in

united hearts. Fire burns only when fuel is in contact. It is easy to scatter a blaze so as to extinguish the last ember and the faintest spark.

Work for the spiritual conquest of the world is also essential for individual growth in spiritual capacity. They who give receive ; they who labor develop. Exercise increases muscle ; activity promotes assimilation. The scholar who plods in his study incessantly will not acquire as much well-balanced truth as he who tempers scholarly seclusion with judicious social contact. He who has ideals will never rectify and enlarge them until he tests them in life. But above all else, he who would have spiritual visions must behold spiritual needs, spiritual forces, spiritual operations, and must himself labor for spiritual ends.

Ah, mankind must discern the reality of pure spiritual existence both here and hereafter, and the relation of this life to the life to come. In the midst of this worldliness we need frequently to remind ourselves that the soul is more than food or clothing or fine houses or all of these material things ; that as the soul begins to live now it will live hereafter ; that it needs now, in part at least, what it will more fully need and experience hereafter, — spiritual exercises and activities in the fellowship of God. Spirituality

is possible now, in this life, and may increase throughout all this life, even unto eternity.

And so man may look forward into the future, striving to grow. As human knowledge and human capacity for knowledge increase, God can reveal unto man more of his truth. His revelation progresses in proportion to man's increase of capacity to receive. With hopeful expectancy, therefore, and strong determination we may all use the words of the Apostle Paul: —

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind (as mere attainments), and reaching forth unto those that are before, I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

In the person of Christ, when we know him as he is, shall each of us find personal satisfaction and fulfillment. His method is one of progressive development and growth. He does not work through sudden revolution, but by slower, surer evolution.

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